THE DIARY OF MAHADEV DESAI

Volume 1

Yeravda-Pact Eve, 1932

PAR

NAVAJIVAN PUBLISHING HOUSE
AHMEDABAD

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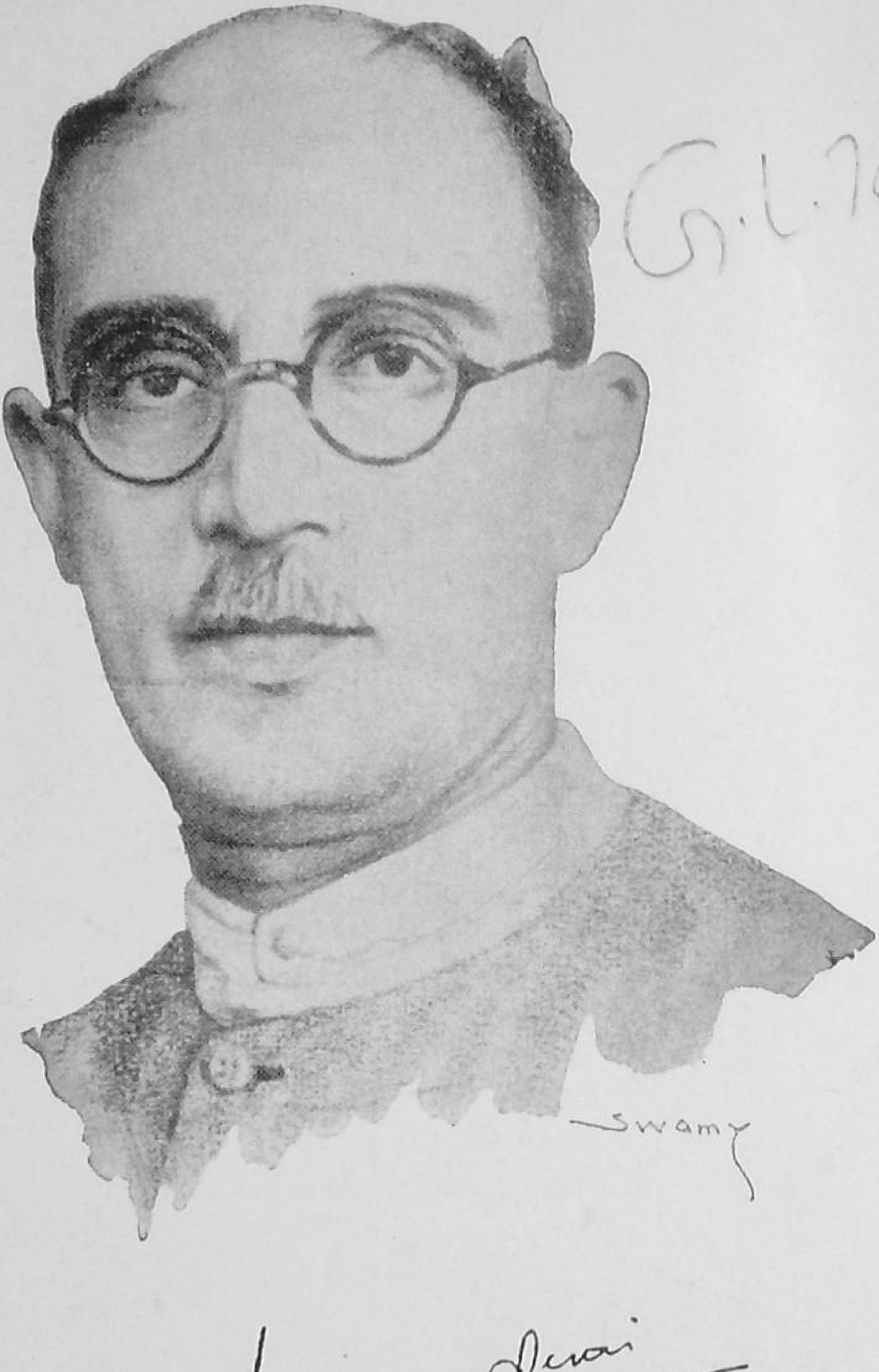
From the *Editor's Note*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THE DIARY OF MAHADEV DESAI

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THE DIARY
OF
MAHADEV DESAI

G.L 86
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TRANSLATED FROM THE GUJARATI AND EDITED
BY

VALJI GOVINDJI DESAI
SCHOLAR OF GUJARAT COLLEGE (1910);
FELLOW OF ELPHINSTONE COLLEGE (1914)

Volume I
Yeravda-Pact Eve, 1932

NAVAJIVAN PUBLISHING HOUSE
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EDITOR'S NOTE

Ever since he became Gandhiji's secretary towards the end of 1917, Shri Mahadev Desai kept a diary, in which he jotted down notes of Gandhiji's speeches, letters and interviews with persons of distinction as well as his own views on current events and various subjects. He had hoped to utilize these notes in writing a life of Gandhiji. But that was not to be ; for he died the death of a martyr in prison on August 15, 1942.

Such of these notes as could and should be soon placed before the public were published by him in *Young India* and *Harijan* from time to time. But much valuable material naturally remained unpublished. Navajivan Trustees have decided to place it before the public, this being its first instalment.

The present volume begins on March 10, 1932, the day on which Mahadev Desai was taken to Yeravda prison to keep company with Gandhiji and Sardar Vallabhbhai Patel. It is a curious coincidence that nearly as soon as he met him, Gandhiji showed him his draft of the Great Letter (Appendix II, p. 323) and asked him what he thought of it. This letter in which Gandhiji declared his intention to fast unto death if separate electorates were created for Harijans was dated and sent the very next day. But the warning was neglected and the British Government's decision to create separate electorates for the so-called scheduled classes was published on August 17. On the 18th Gandhiji sent to the British premier a notice of his intention to begin a fast unto death from the noon of September 20 (Appendix III, p. 327). The volume closes on September 4, about a fortnight before the fast which was crowned with the Yeravda Pact.

The importance of this volume lies in that we have here before us for the first time a very full account of Gandhiji's life in prison. He was no less active there than outside. Only his activity took a different direction. Thus

we find him looking after other prisoners like a father, prosecuting studies for which he had no time outside, performing dietetic experiments, spinning in spite of pain now in the right hand and then in the left, observing the stars, taking his morning and evening walks and carrying on an extensive correspondence with members of the Sabarmati Ashram and others.

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Last but not the least, we are in the company of Mahadev Desai, humble and self-effacing, always discontented with his own achievement, reading books and analysing them for us, making study of 'crusted characters' whom he happened to meet, initiating discussions with Gandhiji on a variety of subjects and placing them on record for our benefit.

As regards this translation, I am painfully aware of its inevitable inadequacy, as Gandhiji is no longer in our midst to have a look at it.

Shri Mahendra Desai gave the translation an auspicious start by doing the first few pages. The criticism of the typescript by my friend and former pupil, Shri Karimbhai Vora, has been of great value. Shri Vimalchandra Desai and Shri Sudarshan Desai read some of the proofs. Shri Ashok Desai read some proofs for the fun of it, unfortunately for us only after the forms had been printed off, and detected errors which had escaped notice. However, I need scarcely say that the responsibility for the book as it stands is wholly mine.

Samvat 2009, Matrinavami V. G. D.

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Thanks are due to the following for permitting quotations: the Rt. Hon. Viscount Templewood, G.C.S.I., G.B.E. (*The Fourth Seal*); Shri S. Radhakrishnan and George Allen and Unwin Ltd. (*The Bhagvadgita*); Count Keyserling and Jonathan Cape Ltd. (*The Travel Diary of a Philosopher*) and Dr Drummond and Hodder and Stoughton Ltd. (*Natural Law in the Spiritual World*).

एकमेवाद्वितीयं तद् यद्राजन्नावबुध्यसे ।
सत्यं स्वर्गस्य सोपानं पारावारस्य नौरिव ॥
महाभारत (उद्योगपर्व) ॥

" Would that even for a day we had behaved
ourselves well in this world ! "
" Be therefore always in readiness, and so live,
That death may never find thee unprepared."

Thomas à Kempis

" They are slaves who fear to speak
For the fallen and the weak ;
They are slaves who will not choose
Hatred, scoffing and abuse,
Rather than in silence shrink
From the truth they needs must think.
They are slaves who dare not be
In the right with two or three."

J. R. Lowell

" And Sin, that which separates from God, which disobeys God, which *can* not in that state correspond with God — this is Hell. Sin is simply apostasy from God, unbelief in God."

H. Drummond

" The Hindus' very word for truth is full of meaning. . . .Truth was with them that which is."

Max Muller : *India, what can it teach us*, p. 82.

THE DIARY OF MAHADEV DESAI

I

GRAMASEVAKS TRAINING CENTRE
16 APR 1955
T. KALLUPATTI

*March 10, 1932

I had not the faintest idea that such a day as this would dawn for me. But I did once dream in Nasik prison that I was all of a sudden taken to Bapu in Yeravda prison and that I fell at his feet, crying all the while and unable to check my tears.

Roche came to me in the morning and said, "You are being transferred from here; you get ready in one hour." I asked him, "Where will they take me?" He replied, "You will be happy and thankful when you know it but I must not say a word." I asked to meet Dr Chandulal Desai but my request was turned down. We left Nasik at nine. The policemen who escorted me were the same as had a few days ago accompanied Vitthalbhai here. One of them turned out to be an old acquaintance of the days when Bapu saw Lord Reading. He remembered the date correctly — June 17, 1921. He was then a bearer to Sir Charles Innes. He had subsequently served elsewhere and was now in the police.

When Akbar Ali embraced me with tearful eyes and told me from his closed cell about his prayerful wish that I should be kept with Gandhiji, I said, "You may pray for me, but can I be so lucky as that?" He replied, "True, but I can only hope and pray." What stories had I heard about Akbar Ali! But he showered his affection on me, and his prayers bore fruit. Pyarelal used to tell everybody at Nasik that they had fixed this up with Martin. This was also true though I regarded it as a mere joke.

I was received rather coldly at Yeravda prison and I feared they just wanted to get rid of me at Nasik, without keeping me in Bapu's company here. Then came Kateli, smiling, and asked me to go with him. He was informed at four in the morning that I was to be kept with Gandhiji.

* For interesting glimpses of Gandhiji's life in Yeravda prison from January to March 10 and afterwards see *Bapu's Letters to Mira* (Navajivan), pp. 165, et seq. *Ed.*

Bapu too was surprised when I placed my head at his feet. He patted me on the back, the head and the cheeks more fondly than ever before. I felt deeply grateful but was overwhelmed by a sense of my unworthiness. Later I learnt from Bapu and the Sardar that Shri Purushottamdas also had a hand in bringing me to Yeravda. Last time Dahyabhai did say that — had done the needful.

After some rambling talk, Bapu said, "You have come at the right moment, for Vallabhbhai is at his wit's end. Did he tell you about it?" Vallabhbhai suggested that I should eat something before we started our discussions. He brought me food — bread, butter, curds and boiled sweet potatoes. He and Bapu had already finished their meals. When I finished, Bapu gave me his letter to Sir Samuel Hoare and asked me what I thought of it.

I said, "I find the reasoning sound. I have often felt about the repression that one need not be surprised if some day it leads Bapu thus to voice his indignation. Why does Vallabhbhai object? Is it because as President of Congress, he finds himself unable to endorse this step of yours?"

Bapu said, "No, he is not worried on that account. He doubts if he can give his consent as a co-worker. But I have never imagined Vallabhbhai looking at things from a religious viewpoint. It is only to be expected that he should look at this from the political angle. My relations with Vallabhbhai are not on a religious basis, as they are with you. Vallabhbhai is afraid that I shall lay myself open to misinterpretation. The Government will say: 'Gandhi has always been a man of this type. He has gone mad; Let him alone with his madness.' And Vallabhbhai also thinks the people will be shocked, and then again there is the grave danger of such fasts being imitated in the wrong spirit. But that does not matter. What if I am taken for a mad man and die? That would be the end of my mahatmaship, if it is false and undeserved. Friends like Romain Rolland will understand my standpoint. But even if they don't, I should be concerned only with my duty as a man of religion."

I said, "The world can understand a fast as a protest against repression but not perhaps on the question of Harijan representation. The British will try to mislead the world into believing that most if not all Harijans favour separate electorates. I should also suggest you made it clearer how the separate electorates are intended to strike a blow at the body politic. I am pretty sure, however, that even honest Britons will fail to see how."

Bapu said, "If we tried to make this clearer, we would have to describe the Muslims' share in this sordid business. And that would increase Hindu-Muslim tension. This would be very much like what happened in connection with the earlier twenty-one days' fast when Mahomed Ali got a few sentences in my statement scored out."

I said, "Some will ask if this really was a sin more heinous than that committed by the Hindus so that you felt yourself compelled to undertake a fast."

Bapu said, "We have been trying to make Hindu society repent of its sin. But the separate electorates are meant to perpetuate the sin or to make it impossible for the Hindus to repent. They will end in nothing but a civil war between the caste Hindus and Harijans, and between Hindus and Muslims."

Vallabhbhai said, "I am unconvinced of the rightness of your move, but now you are free to do what you think is right."

Bapu corrected the letter and went to bed. But I did not sleep till after midnight.

We got up at a quarter to four for the morning prayers. We had a wash and as we gathered together, Bapu gave the programme: "Vallabhbhai recites the *shlokas* (stanzas). He has little knowledge of Sanskrit and his pronunciation is bad. So I thought this was the only way it could be improved. You will find that he has made considerable progress. I sing the hymn, but not from memory. So we read one hymn after another from the Ashram hymnal. We thought we would start with the Marathi section today. But now that you are here, you will

lead us in singing the hymn and in **Ramadhun*." I requested Bapu to lead us in *Ramadhun*. This discussion we had had at night. My first hymn was *Prabhu mere* etc., 'O God, do not mind my heavy load of sin.' What else could I have sung?

MARCH 11, 1932

I tried to sleep again after the prayers but did not get any sleep. I had already said I should have tea in the morning. I asked Vallabhbhai, "Have you given up tea?" He said, "What is the use of taking tea after having become Bapu's companion in jail? I decided to eat exactly what he did. I gave up rice and take bread, milk and boiled vegetable like Bapu." Fond of tea as he was, Vallabhbhai gave it up; I also therefore determined to follow suit.

Preparing the tooth-stick, making lemon and honey water and cleaning dates for Bapu — all this Vallabhbhai had taken upon himself. He said with a smile, "I never knew that I would be kept with Bapu. Or I would have asked Kaka what things are to be done for him. As it is, Bapu never says a word and so one cannot find out. Bapu comes out of the bath-room only after he has washed his own clothes; so there is no washing of clothes either." Bapu had simplified the whole job of laundering and Vallabhbhai told me how: "The other day, Bapu entered the bath-room having only a napkin with him and found only in the end that he had not brought a towel. Squeezing water out of the napkin, he wiped his body with it. He does not change clothes everyday and now he has discovered that one can do even without a towel. Mira used to wash three napkins a day but now we have only one to wash, and that too on alternate days." There are some ordinary prisoners to help us. One of these, Maruti, is in the habit of prostrating himself at Bapu's and Vallabhbhai's feet both morning and evening. He extended this courtesy to me also. But I said, "Good man, I am just one like you."

The Major came at ten and said to me, "You are a B class prisoner. I will therefore treat you as such, for I

* Repetition of *Rama-nama* (the name of Rama or God). *Ed.*

have received no special orders." He then sent me my own clothes to wear. But the rest of my kit was kept back for search.

While spinning Bapu told me about the improvements he has effected in spinning-wheel design. Nowadays he spins about 250 yards every day, but complains that he still has a sense of physical fatigue.

At noon Bapu sent the letter to Sir Samuel Hoare along with a covering letter, and said, " I now feel like collapsing just as I did after the truce. It was past midnight when everything was settled. Irwin asked Emerson to cable to Benn ; and then he came and sat with me. He was sad and so was I. I broke the silence and said, ' I am quite cool myself and notice that so are you. Let me therefore warn you that I am a fighter and might be compelled to renew the struggle. You also perhaps feel that you have not done well to come to an agreement with me, as the official class is opposed to your move and the whole atmosphere is unfavourable. In that case you please withdraw the cable even now. It does not matter if Benn will call me a fool.' He replied, ' No, no, I have no such feeling as you think. You do fight if you have to fight after all. But of course you will fight fair. What is done is done.' So long as the letter was not sent, I had been feeling that the sooner it went the better. But now that it has gone, I am overwhelmed by a sense of the heavy responsibility I have taken upon myself....It is possible that separate electorates for Harijans are now out of the question, or perhaps they will release me and let me die."

I said, " If they did so, the fast would agitate the public mind in a manner of which they have no conception."

Bapu said yes.

March 12, 1932

In the morning Vallabhbhai said, " Bapu set out from the Ashram on the march to Dandi exactly two years ago and at this time of the day he had already left Chandola lake behind him." The struggle has now lasted for two years with a short interlude.

Vallabhbhai asked Bapu, "How many dates may I clean ?" Bapu replied, "Fifteen."

Vallabhbhai : "Where is the difference between 15 and 20 ?"

Bapu : "All right. Then give me only ten."

Vallabhbhai said to me, "Well, Mahadev, what a kind of jail is this ? Did anybody spread your bed for you at home ? Or give you toasted bread, butter, milk and a variety of vegetables to eat ?" But this picture did not enthuse me at all, as only the other day I had witnessed quite a different picture in Nasik prison, and I was aware that the amenities we enjoyed in Yeravda were due to Bapu.

Under yesterday's date I forgot to note down one point which Bapu had made. He said, "Here they will give me every possible facility. I did not expect they would keep you with me as they have done. But these things cannot blind me to realities or make me swerve from the strait and narrow path. I seek your opinion on other things but not about fasting. I would not have asked anybody if the situation had been one like that in Delhi. Generally I take decisions and then only announce them. But this time I had to deliver something in the nature of an ultimatum. We can certainly discuss anything of which notice has to be given."

In the afternoon we received the jail library catalogue. Bapu asked if it listed anything by Scott, Macaulay, Jules Verne and Victor Hugo, Kingsley's *Westward Ho*, or Goethe's *Faust*. He asked me to get Edward Carpenter's *Adam's Peak to Elephanta* and Nivedita's *Cradle Tales of Hinduism*, and said it was in a South African jail that he read Stevenson's *The Strange Case of Dr Jekyll and Mr Hyde* for the first time. I said this library also contained a book by Stevenson — *Virginibus Puerisque*. Bapu said it must be worth reading.

Talking about astronomy he said, "I have now made good progress in my study of the heavenly bodies. Did you observe the sky with Kaka ? Here I take the *Illustrated Weekly* map for my guide and have gone far beyond

Rohini, Krittika, Mriga, Anuradha and *Jyeshtha* constellations. Herbert Kitchin, a co-worker in South Africa, had great interest in the subject and took me to an observatory. But he failed to infect me with his enthusiasm, as my mind was then absorbed in other things. Now however I enjoy my study of the heavens immensely. It broadens our outlook indeed."

Talking of books I said, "Bapu, you must read Marx and reply to his argument so as to make a permanent contribution to literature for our young men."

Bapu replied, "You are right. I also have some such feeling. Then again I wish to know something about Russia."

I mentioned *The Mind and Face of Bolshevism* and Sherwood Eddy's book. Bapu asked me to get them but not for one month.

Bapu is now reading Upton Sinclair's *The Wet Parade* and with great interest. He said, "Sinclair is rendering great service. He takes one social evil after another and throws a fierce light upon it."

I said, "And yet he is a prolific writer like Edgar Wallace. I wonder how people can bring out even thrillers one after another as in a flood. Wallace used to dictate his novels."

Bapu replied, "Mahadev, it is quite possible thus to throw off one story after another. Tolstoy said when once a man had taken a considerable amount of alcohol and begun to smoke a cigar, his imagination was sure to run riot. In writing fiction, you do not have to consult any authorities."

MARCH 13, 1932

Bapu cut out the map of the sky from the *Illustrated Weekly* and asked Vallabhbhai to paste it on cardboard. Vallabhbhai also prepared a beautiful envelope for the Ashram post from wrapping paper salvaged for the purpose.

Bapu said the *Hindu* was an imitation of the London *Times* and its weekly edition of the *Illustrated Weekly of*

India. I said, "But the *Illustrated Weekly* is for frivolous people while the weekly *Hindu* is not all on the same level." Bapu replied, "Well, yes, but the weekly *Hindu* also is pretty full of frivolities."

Bapu devoted the afternoon to writing the Ashram post, and reading *The Wet Parade*. He commenced the twenty-four hours' silence at 3 p.m., and coming to the following sentence, showed it to me: "Everybody had to choose between self-indulgence and self-control." I reminded Bapu of the title of one of his books, *Self-Restraint v. Self-Indulgence*. He seemed to say that the whole book was summarized in that single sentence.

After supper Vallabhbhai crushed the tip of a tooth-stick into a brush for Bapu as usual and said, "Bapu has only a few teeth intact and yet he is busy brushing them. It would be all right if it was a hollow thing, but he is making music out of a solid pestle." I said, "In the 1930 campaign our pestle, such as it was, poured forth excellent music." Bapu agreed to this with a smile. Vallabhbhai said, "It is the same story this year. But we cannot help it if the caravan * passes."

Bapu wants a pinch of soda to be added to nearly every article of food. So whenever there is some difficulty, Vallabhbhai says, 'Add a pinch of soda and all will be well.' He made us laugh heartily with the story of a physician who was always prescribing the strong Indian aperient *nepalo*.

Bapu sent a reply to Emerson's letter, in which he drew an important distinction between loyalty to colleagues and loyalty to truth.

MARCH 14, 1932

Bapu received the Government's reply to his letter about interviews in which he had asked them to define politics, and dwelt at length upon the meaning of the word as he understood it. Government write that only such people could meet Bapu as took no part in politics. Bapu said,

* Referring to Sir Samuel Hoare's remark, 'Dogs may bark, but the caravan passes.' *Ed.*

"Still they do not specify those who do not go to jail or take part in the civil disobedience movement. Therefore they seem at last to have left me to put my own meaning on the word politics."

Today is the day on which Bapu writes to members of the Ashram, the homeward mail day as the Sardar calls it. He wrote about 42 letters to Ashramites besides half a dozen addressed to others.

To one of the children he wrote: "Even if the present dull stage of the struggle lasts a long time, our energies must not flag, as flag they must if we are unhappy about it." *

Somebody has sent a bottle of eucalyptus oil from the Nilgiris. Bapu got it uncorked and said to the Sardar, "There is pain in my thumb and in your nose. Some one therefore has sent it of set purpose. Please put it not along with other bottles but separately so that it is not broken by the cats."

Received a letter from Shrimati Sarojini Naidu. She came to see Bapu but was not permitted to do so. She therefore left a note for Bapu with the Superintendent. As regards her mission to South Africa she writes: "A good deal has been achieved there. It was something like striking living water out of obdurate rock." She is full of praise for Sir Fazl-i-Husain. She salutes Bapu as "the most unseeable being."

This morning Bapu awoke at 3 a.m. instead of at 3:45 as usual. I said, 'I heard only three strokes on the bell.' Bapu looked at his watch, saw that it was three and said, "Now that we are awake, let us offer our morning prayers." It was four when we had washed and offered our prayers. We then had lemon squash with honey. Bapu and the Sardar take a walk every day between half past four and half past five. As Bapu was observing his weekly silence, he asked the Sardar in writing to finish his sleep. But the Sardar said, 'No, I will follow in your footsteps.'

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* For other letters written on March 14, see *Selected Letters, First Series* (Navajivan), XXVIII—XXX. *Ed.*

MARCH 15, 1932

Bapu asked the Major about Haridas' condition but did not receive a satisfactory answer. He therefore asked the Major to let him address a couple of lines to Haridas. The Major said it could not be permitted. Bapu said, " Major Martin did permit me to send such notes to other prisoners." The Major replied it would be better if he conveyed his (Bapu's) message to Haridas. Bapu said that would do but it would be better if he was allowed to send a note. The Major said, " What if I show him the letter you have written today ? " Bapu wrote to Martin, requesting permission to meet Haridas before Friday.

But Haridas is not the only source of worry to Bapu. There is also other bad news. Kaka Saheb, Narahari and Prabhudas have been transferred to Belgam where Kaka had to fast for seven days before he got a spinning wheel. Prabhudas is in hospital. Narahari has been kept with other political prisoners but Kaka is in a separate ward. Prabhudas was brought to the jail gate by force and had to talk with interviewers through the bars. This took my breath away. Any one of these people is fitter to keep Bapu company than I. But perhaps it is God's will that they should become even fitter still by passing through this ordeal while I should turn the searchlight inwards and be thoroughly ashamed of myself.

Bapu saw that I was deeply grieved at this news and said, " I am inclined to think that these incidents are not of much consequence. Jail for us is no jail at all. So it is a good thing that some people at least should have a taste of the real thing." I replied, " Yes, it is good in a way. The prisoners at Visapur must have rejoiced to have Jamnalalji in their midst, and those at Belgam must certainly be proud of the company of Kaka and Narahari." Bapu continued : " As for me I have not felt the severity of jail life at all." I said, " You did feel it in 1922. You were not allowed to boil the milk twice a day." Bapu replied, " That is not true. I got whatever I wanted. I did not write any letters, and did not meet visitors. But it is something like that even now. It was in South

Africa that we suffered real imprisonment. We were abused and beaten not by the prison staff but by Zulu prisoners with whom we were kept. The sanitary convenience consisted in a tin below and a wooden plank above, on which we had to squat without anything to rest the hand upon and without any privacy. One day I was uneasily seated when a Zulu prisoner came and pushed me with a slap. I fell and collided against a wall. It was sheer good luck that my head was not broken or I would have bled profusely. The Zulu thought that I was spoiling his seat by placing my feet upon them. That day I could not attend to nature's need. The next day I spoke to the Superintendent about this and said, "If you give us only this type of convenience, such ugly incidents are bound to recur. I do not lay any blame on the poor Zulu, but there should be a different arrangement for us Indians. We must have water at hand and facilities to assume a particular posture." Separate arrangements for Indians were made the very next day, and that because I happened to be there. Or else the Indians would have continued to suffer for many days more. And what kind of food did we get ? Mealie pap thrice a day for 3 days ; rice for 2 days with salt and *ghi* (clarified butter) and without *dal* (pulse) or vegetable ; and boiled pease for 2 days. We complained about this and were permitted to cook our own food. But the dietary was still the same. Thambi Naidu was our cook and prepared excellent rice which all of us ate with relish. My cell was hardly three or four feet broad and six feet long with no light at all and only a window near the roof for ventilation. Such cells were called isolation cells. I was surrounded by the worst type of criminals. One of these had 30 convictions to his credit, another had been sentenced for rape and all of them were Zulus. I was to cut the pockets of prisoners' shirts which the others were to sew. Cutting was assigned to me as the Zulus could not be trusted with scissors. Later on I was given blanket knitting, i.e. sewing torn blankets together so as to make *razais* (quilts). We worked from 6 to 11 a.m. and again from 12 to 5, nine hours in all, but I never

felt tired. I went on asking for more blankets. In Pretoria prison they did not issue any *ghi* with the rice. I therefore gave it up. I took mealie pap once a day. The doctor offered me bread but I would not accept it. At last he came round, gave me *ghi* and the bread too. For some time we were put upon extramural tasks, such as pickaxe work in stony ground. A prisoner named Jhinabhai Desai actually fainted while digging. A warder named Griffith continued to cry, 'Go on, go on.' I warned him that we would stop working if he did not mend his manners. And then he behaved himself. I lost considerable weight in those days but did not mind it. When I went to jail a third time the question of my diet was solved. I asked for dates, groundnuts and lemons and got them. Harilal also was a brave boy in those days. He was kept in some out of the way jail, but he fasted for 7 days and succeeded in getting himself transferred elsewhere. I was then out of jail but did not interfere in the matter at all. That was real jail life. As for India even ordinary prisoners here are not treated so badly as we politicals were in South Africa. There was improvement in the diet later on and life was less hard than at first. It was during these comparatively better times that Imamsaheb went to jail."

Bapu finished *The Wet Parade* today and strongly recommended it to Vallabhbhai as a history of prohibition in America, some chapters of which were very fine. He now began to read *Adam's Peak to Elephanta*.

We received a number of leaflets from — which provided us with food for laughter. The Sardar sewed them together into a book and said, "Bapu, this is worth reading but as it is entitled 'rays of knowledge,' there is a danger of the rays penetrating too deeply into our minds." Bapu read the leaflets and laughed at every line, especially after reading one with the caption "Do not keep a lamp burning." Vallabhbhai said the leaflet itself was probably written by the author burning midnight oil. Bapu observed, "The poor fellows are working according to their lights. But nowhere is there a mention of the name of Congress. That shows how full of fear the writer is. A man must by

compulsion be silent even when he has to make a clear statement. And Government too think that this is a desirable state of things, although the prime mover is Congress. To what a sorry plight we are reduced ! "

Bapu put Jivanji in the category of my clansmen and let him meet me in company with *Durga.

MARCH 16, 1932

Yesterday we read the news that Ba† was touring Bardoli *taluka*, and I said, " Ba should get 6 months this time." Bapu said he would not be surprised if she was placed in C class with hard labour. And today's papers show that our forecast was true. Bapu's joy knew no bounds. He laughed and said, " Was not the magistrate ashamed of awarding rigorous imprisonment to an old woman 60 years old ? Vallabhbhai too should have been placed in C class." The Sardar said, " I would be very happy if I was taken to the extension outside the prison walls."

In answer to a correspondent's question, Bapu wrote : " It is possible and necessary to treat human beings on terms of equality, but this can never apply to their morals. One should be affectionate and attentive to a rascal and to a saint ; but one cannot and must not put saintliness and rascality on the same footing."

I said, " According to Bhide Shastri's interpretation of *samata* in the Gita, to punish the wicked and to honour the good is to treat them on terms of equality, because there is justice and mercy in punishing the wicked. It all depends upon our motives." Bapu replied, " Do you know Stokes is of the same opinion ? But I say that one cannot punish the wicked humanely." Vallabhbhai said, " If one can kill a calf suffering from incurable disease with kindness, why cannot he do so in the case of the wicked man ?" But Bapu laughed the question out.

Vallabhbhai wondered if any one ever wished to die. Bapu said, " Some do wish to die as for instance those who commit suicide."

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* Mahadev Desai's wife. *Ed.*

† Mrs Gandhi. *Ed.*

Referring to T's definition of a *lathi* (club), Bapu said, "He is now revealing himself in his true colours. There are some such who believe in calling a spade a spade." Upon the names of Macdonald and Hoare being mentioned, Vallabhbhai said, "They are all tarred with the same brush." "No," said Bapu. "Men like Gilbert Murray and Lowes Dickinson in all honesty argued how on earth we could govern ourselves. Others also honestly hold certain opinions. How would we behave if we were rulers in their place?" Vallabhbhai said, "Supposing we behaved exactly in the same way, should we not be called wicked?" Bapu replied, "Yes, but we would certainly not like to be so called. Therefore it is not necessary to believe that these people are wicked."

Received a letter from Major Martin in which he says he has forwarded Bapu's letter to Government and asked for a reply by return of post. He has also asked Bhandari for a report on Haridas.

A letter from Maxwell to Bhandari was shown to Bapu asking the latter to inform Bapu that the Government of Bombay had received a letter from India Office expressing *Sergeant Evans and Rogers' appreciation of the watches they had received as a present from Bapu.

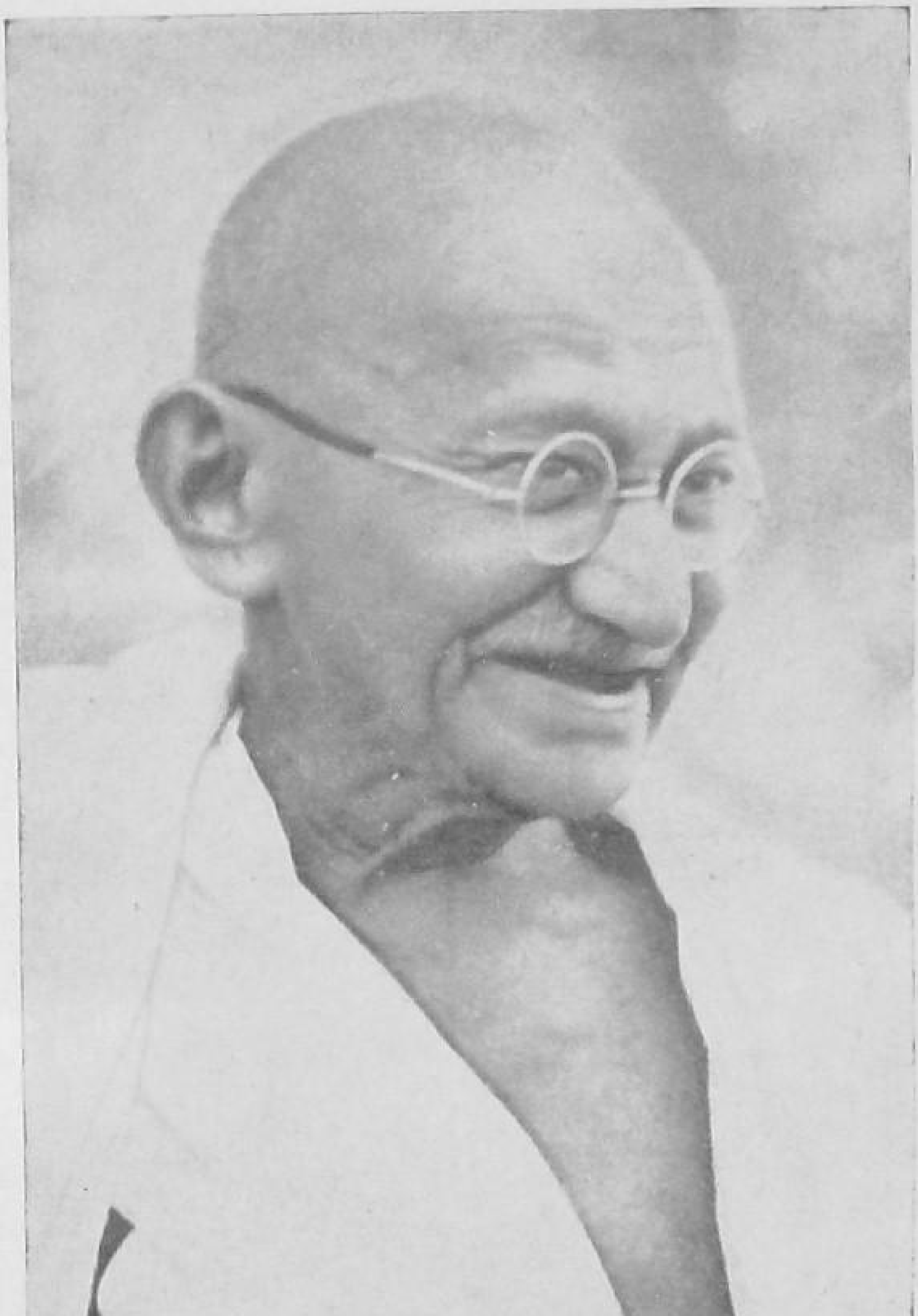
ARCH 17, 1932

Dr. Madantjit died in Insein Jail at the advanced age of 72. The doctor had his defects but there is no doubt that he had devoted himself to the service of Burma, and he has now crowned it all by dying in jail. Bapu is very proud of him.

The *Times of India* says Ba has been sentenced to simple imprisonment.

Today's *Bombay Chronicle* copies from *Advance* Benthall's confidential report about the Round Table Conference which lets the cat out of the bag. We were talking about the possibility of Shrimati Sarojini being placed in C class, when Bapu said, "I don't think the Government would go to such a length." Vallabhbhai said,

* Detectives in continual attendance on Gandhiji in England where he had gone for the Round Table Conference. *Ed.*



M. K. Gandhi

"Have they not placed Ba in C class? Still you say this. You will judge not lest you be judged." As regards Sir Samual Hoare, Vallabhbhai asked, "How can he turn a blind eye to events?" Bapu replied, "That is the conservative temperament. During the World War they were saying that they were winning till the Germans actually entered France."

Bapu feels much pain in the left elbow as well as in the right thumb, and says, "This is a sign of old age. We must not waste a thought over such pain. We must accept it as inevitable and cease to fuss over it."

Vallabhbhai added, "Like that hatha-yogi?"

Bapu then said, "I think I would have had high blood pressure if I had been out of prison, because even now I have not made up for lost sleep."

I said, "It is a godsend that you are now in jail and at rest."

Bapu replied, "Certainly. And then there were baffling problems, which I do not know how I could have tackled as a free man. Hindu-Muslim differences, and the problem posed by the Redshirts in the Frontier province are cases in point. But now real Congressmen will be divided from others like sheep from goats. It is quite possible that when we are released, the whole situation will have changed to our advantage by the grace of God."

After reading ——'s evidence tendered before the Franchise Committee Bapu remarked, "He speaks as if he had sold himself. What are we to think of a man who opposes the introduction of adult franchise?"

March 18, 1932

The Superintendent came at about 12 to reply to Bapu's ultimatum to Martin. Bapu was then thinking of informing the authorities that he would take no food in the evening. The Superintendent told Bapu that he had been permitted to see three prisoners every fortnight, on condition that he did not discuss jail discipline or politics or the news about other prisoners with them, and the interview lasted for not more than 20 minutes. Bapu must

meet these prisoners in the Superintendent's office so that they could not talk with the Sardar or with me. It was not easy to swallow all this. But Bapu said he did not want to quarrel with it, and asked to see Haridas, Narsinhbhai and Chhaganlal Joshi. He then remembered that he must see some women prisoner too, and so asked to see Gangabehn. This last request upset the Superintendent. He said women could not be brought outside their jail, and he failed to see how Bapu could be taken to them. He therefore said he would write to the Inspector-General of Prisons about it.

Bapu is strongly of opinion that when once we are in jail we may not insist upon meeting people who are outside. There is no sense in going to jail and still expecting to meet outsiders. But at the same time he holds that it is as much a prisoner's duty as it is his right to keep himself informed about the condition of fellow-prisoners, and he must always insist upon exercising this right.

Bapu suggested to Narandas Gandhi that in view of his brutality X should be sterilized or else his wife be taught effective methods of birth control, but left him free to take his own decision in the matter according to his lights. This is an exception to Bapu's opposition to birth control in general.

I finished reading Samuel Hoare's *The Fourth Seal*, an excellent book with a fine portrait of the Grand Duchess. It shows how he successfully mastered Russian and what a devoted servant of the British Empire he was. Bapu said his defence of the Tsar in the last chapter betrayed a royalist tendency. I said, " He believes that the war would have had quite a different result if the Tsar had not abdicated. He makes light of the Russian revolution and the consequent birth of a nation. He only sees the 'pale horse followed by death, red ruin and famine.' " Bapu replied that was so, but Hoare was right that if the Tsar had not abdicated and had continued to hold the reins of administration he would not have met with a violent death.

" Would not the people have killed him if he had not abdicated ? " I asked.

"One never can tell," replied Bapu. "In any case he ought to have faced his people bravely."

MARCH 19, 1932

I asked Bapu about Madanjit. Bapu said he was a Nagar Brahman from Junagadh. He went from Zanzibar to South Africa where he lived with Bapu. Some money was stolen from Bapu's cash-box. Madanjit was therefore asked about the keys, got angry and left Bapu. Upon finding that the keys had been stolen by some one else, Bapu called him back. He came but did not live with Bapu again. Bapu helped him to establish a printing press and to start *Indian Opinion*. Nazar wrote for it articles which were revised by Bapu and then published. Only 400 copies of the paper were sold so that Bapu incurred a loss of 50 to 60 pounds a month. He sent Chhaganlal Gandhi to look into the accounts, but in vain. He then sent West who reported that it was a losing concern fit only to be wound up. When Bapu decided to issue *Indian Opinion* from Phoenix Madanjit went to India with a note of recommendation from Bapu addressed to Gokhale. In Burma Madanjit spoke ill of Bapu, but he had one inestimable virtue, namely that he never cared to earn a single pie for himself and was utterly unselfish. He was suspicious of other men and prone to find fault with them but he was devoted to the service of the people. And God appreciated his service by bringing his life to an end in jail.

The Ashram post is received in a thick envelope which we utilize once more by pasting upon it brown paper salvaged from parcels. I said we obtained these envelopes at the cost of brown paper only. Bapu replied, "Yes, but the bottle of mucilage was an eyesore to me. I thought of experimenting with flour paste but gave up the idea, thus taking the middle path." Upon this Vallabhbhai remarked, "The man of the middle path has retired to Lakhtar."

With reference to the newspaper report that the notice served on — asking him to report himself to the police every day had been withdrawn, I said, "All these people

are the victims of the same kind of logic." "Yes," said Bapu, "the logic of weakness."

Sarojini Devi had an invitation to go to Simla. She sought Bapu's opinion whether or not she should go. But Bapu refused to be drawn out. The Sardar however asked Dahyabhai to tell her not to go.

MARCH 20, 1932

Bapu asked me to prepare a list of books to be sent to Chhaganlal Joshi, excluding from it Brailsford, Crozier and Durant's books, as these deal with politics and books on this subject are not given to C class prisoners. He then said, "Go through Maithilisharan Gupta's *Saketa*. It will take only two days to read." It seemed difficult indeed to finish a volume of 450 pages in two days, but I was sure that Bapu's estimate could not be far out. I therefore began to read the book and had read 300 pages before I went to bed. I would have finished the whole book before retiring if I had not to get up at a quarter to four in time for prayers.

MARCH 21, 1932

Finished *Saketa* at 4 p.m. It is an original, beautiful and immortal creation of the poet. He has taken the Ramayan story for his ground-work and has built up a fine superstructure on it by his imagination. The language is simple, the verses flow from beginning to end like a brook of clear water. No matter how often we read the Ramayan story, there are several incidents in it which always bring tears to our eyes. Urmila is a new and fine character. Only the ninth canto has in it too much imitation of Sanskrit poetry. But on the whole the poem furnishes elevating reading, moving in a lofty atmosphere from beginning to end.

Bapu wrote 40 letters for the Ashram including those written yesterday besides reminiscences of Imam Saheb. Jugatram wrote saying that some stood to their guns while others had fallen back. To him Bapu replied :

"We did expect to hear from you. All that are born do not reach the age of maturity. Again the mortality rises

when an epidemic breaks out. I was not therefore surprised to read your narrative. It is a matter for surprise as well as rejoicing that the mortality has not risen. And where is the use of mourning over casualties ? Perhaps the death of the moribund is only to be welcomed. And people die only to be born again. Sorrow therefore is entirely uncalled for. One who has not mastered the art of standing alone would be upset by external changes. But only they can approach the God of Truth who are fit to stand alone." *

Upon reading today's newspapers, Bapu felt that the plot to drown the Australian Premier was an imperialist conspiracy. Labour and therefore socialism predominates in Australia, and imperialism and fascism are there today to combat socialism. We notice a similar situation in South Africa. The Jameson raid had the same background. It was a good fortune that Kruger had an able and Machiavellian secretary who foiled the machinations of the raiders, captured them all, had them tried by special tribunals and sentenced to be hanged.

MARCH 22, 1932

We take honey and lime juice after prayers at 4 a.m. Boiling water is poured upon honey and lime juice ; we then wait for a few minutes until the beverage is fit to drink. Since yesterday Bapu has begun to cover his tumbler with a piece of cloth. This morning he asked, "Mahadev, do you know why I cover my tumbler ? There are many minute germs in the air which might fall into the tumbler if it is uncovered, and the piece of cloth keeps them out."

Vallabhbhai said, "We cannot observe *ahimsa* (non-violence) to such an extent."

Bapu laughed and replied, "We may not observe *ahimsa* but we must see that our food and drink are free from dirt."

Bapu hardly ever seeks a favour from the Superintendent. But the fondness for observing the

* Two more letters written on March 21 will be found in *Selected Letters*, First Series, XXXI, XXXII. *Ed.*

heavens has now so grown upon him that for several days before the eclipse occurs he has been inquiring when and where it can be seen. And this morning he said to the Superintendent, "The eclipse begins at a quarter past six when the moon will still be behind the opposite wall, but we can observe the eclipse if you please order the warders to open the gate of our ward." The Superintendent agreed. The jailer came at six and we went out, but the moon offered non-co-operation. She was hidden in the clouds on the horizon, as if objecting to anybody observing her being eclipsed. We waited till seven and it was about time for prayers. Bapu was tired of waiting and in a plaintive voice said, "Vallabhbhai, it seems we shall not be able to see the eclipse." He then asked the jailer to go and to excuse him for the trouble caused to him. But the jailer said, "No. Please wait for ten minutes. As you have waited so long, wait a little more. Perhaps the clouds will disperse, and the moon will make its appearance." We waited. It was now a quarter past seven. Bapu was thoroughly disappointed. He asked the jailer to go, as we should now offer prayers. I asked Bapu, "Did you ever before wait so long in order to observe an eclipse ?" Bapu replied, "No, never. This is due to my present interest in watching the heavens." I asked again, "Not even as a child ?" Bapu said, "No, no. Mother would not allow us to see an eclipse at all, as she was afraid that evil would befall us if we did."

At night Bapu dictated some * letters.

According to Bapu's directions I placed orders for a cooker, rice and *dal*. Vallabhbhai said, "I was on a strict dietary for three months. Let us now see how fine dishes you prepare for me."

Bapu out of his love for us suggested this change of diet, but he did not seem to like it. I wondered if it was not something like Bapu's father having permitted him to witness a dramatic performance in his childhood.

* For two of these and one more summarized under date March 23 see XXXIII — XXXV in *Selected Letters*, First Series. *Ed.*

Bapu finished *From Adam's Peak to Elephanta* and then in a single day went through Maithilisharanbabu's beautiful little book *Anagha*. He asked me to read it too.

MARCH 23, 1932

Vallabhbhai makes fun of the Superintendent, but Bapu would say, "No, sir, you do him an injustice. He is not at fault. He is doing his best." But an incident which occurred today subjected Bapu's charity to a severe test. When Bapu received permission to meet fellow-prisoners he asked to see the women prisoners too. Thereupon the Superintendent obtained from the Inspector-General of Prisons permission for Bapu to write to the women. Bapu thus wrote a letter and gave it to him. He then said he had forgotten to give the letter to the women. As a matter of fact he did not visit the women's ward at all, as some of them had gone on hunger strike. In the meanwhile Gangabehn Jhaveri came to interview prisoners. She had already interviewed Nanibehn Jhaveri; therefore she was able to give us more news about the hunger strike. The Superintendent refuses to visit that ward so long as the strike is on. Bapu thought this to be a wrong attitude; he therefore spoke to the Superintendent very strongly about it, though most courteously. He said, "If I were Inspector-General, I would suspend you for this alone." The Superintendent reluctantly agreed to visit the women's ward, but we heard nothing from him till evening and even nightfall. Bapu resented this silence and wondered if he was fated to fight even an Indian jail Superintendent. Bapu's leniency towards him till now flowed from his *ahimsa*; his present severity was an instance of Satyagraha and the desire to rouse in another a sense of his own duty.

Received a letter from — which satisfied Bapu. The Collector called him. He said to the Collector that he was a Congressman of course, but the Association to which he belonged did not propose to offer civil disobedience for the time being. The Collector regretted the condition of parole being imposed upon him and said, "Would you not write me a note clarifying the policy of your Association?"

— said he did not wish to write any such note, as it would be taken to have been sent to escape from possible imprisonment. Bapu remarked that his action was correct.

I cooked *khichdi* (rice and *dal* cooked together) and vegetable for Vallabhbhai which he liked. It would be a good thing if I can be of some use to him in a spirit of detachment.

Finished *Anagha*. The plot is taken from one of the Jatakas. Maithilisharanji has transformed the hero into an ideal Satyagrahi, civil resister and prisoner, and given the old story a fine artistic shape.

MARCH 24, 1932

Received *Fors Clavigera* from the editor of the *Spectator*. Bapu was absorbed in looking at these volumes. The index at the end filled him with astonishment and he looked into it for half an hour. He then said, "What can the British Bible be?" Vallabhbhai said, "The Bible for the British people? It can only be pounds, shillings and pence." Upon looking into the body of the book I actually found £ s. and d. described as the British Bible.

Reading newspapers aloud is a task assigned to Vallabhbhai. Arogyaswami was spelt in some paper as Arokiaswami. Vallabhbhai read it as Arokia and I laughed. At this he was angry and said, "You may laugh as loud as you please, but I can only read what the newspaperman has written." Bapu said, "But in Tamil there is no difference between k and g." Vallabhbhai replied, "May be, but why do they not utilize g in transliteration?"

Some newspaper criticism of Benthall's confidential report of the R. T. C. to the Calcutta royalists contained a reference to "Gandhi's constructive vacuities." I asked Bapu, "What can these constructive vacuities be like?" Vallabhbhai replied, "Like the over-cooked *dal* which you prepared this morning."

After reading the papers Bapu said, "God is in His Heaven and it's all right with us. Benthall's report and

other disclosures indicate that our presence in prison is the right thing."

Vallabhbhai reads the papers with interest and Bapu hears them or tries to hear them with interest too. The fact is that Bapu does not like this curiosity about events in the world outside which is a common weakness with prisoners, so that they obtain newspapers even by stealth. If we did not get any papers we could utilize the time spent over them to some better purpose. Therefore Bapu would rather forgo this amenity altogether. Upon reading some news about — in the papers Bapu was worried and after hearing from him, replied, "As a matter of fact I should not think about outside events at all. But that is impossible so long as we get the papers."

To Jugatram Bapu * wrote : "The helmsman in charge of our ship is not man but God. And the ship must make progress so long as we have faith in Him. If however we lose faith, it must come to a full stop."

Even while praising somebody Americans cannot help drawing upon their imagination. This defect mars the work of even a sympathetic reporter like Mills. It is further exemplified in an article which I read today :

"When a customs official at Marseilles asked him whether he had any cigarettes, cigars, firearms, alcohol or narcotics in his luggage, he replied in the negative. Nevertheless the travelling equipment was examined. It proved to consist of 3 spinning wheels, 3 looms, 1 can goat's milk, 1 package dried raisins, 1 copy Thoreau's *Civil Disobedience*, 1 set false teeth, 6 diapers."

What a realistic picture likely to deceive the unwary reader into believing it to be true! And yet it is a fabrication from beginning to end.

Bapu said, "I still have a sense of fatigue ; I am not as active as I should be." Vallabhbhai said, "That is because you do not get sufficient nutrition. For instance you have given up dates. If you agree, we shall get dates and fresh fruit for you. How can the body function

* Two letters written on the 24th will be found in *Selected Letters*, First Series, XXXVI and XXXVII. *Ed.*

properly without food?" Bapu replied, "Shall I tell you the truth? I feel it would be a fine thing if I fasted for 10 or 20 days. And when I heard about the women* prisoners' hunger strike, I thought it was a good opportunity. But that question was soon settled. For the rest I am certain that if I fast for some such period, I should become fresh again." If Bapu thus welcomes every opportunity of fasting, I am afraid he might fast in a case that does not call for such action, simply because he has a strong desire to fast. This fear perturbed me very much, though I did not mention it to Bapu.

MARCH 25, 1932

Bapu wrote to the Inspector-General of Prisons inquiring about the health of Kaka, Prabhudas and Jamnalalji as well as requesting permission to correspond with prisoners.

Bapu asked me to find out why the *dal* was not properly cooked in our cooker. There was not sufficient water of course, but Bapu asked me questions about its construction. He said he had a cooker made in Yeravda jail in 1930. He examined our cooker, and said, "In the lowest pan put water instead of *dal*, place *dal* in the pan above the lowest. Thus you will have 4 pans instead of 3 and cook everything with the steam generated in the lowest pan." Vallabhbhai said, "At this rate it will be some days before I get good *dal*." However I propose to make the experiment suggested by Bapu.

I received the proofs of my school edition of the *Autobiography* which the Oxford University Press are bringing out. Bapu read and corrected them.

Bapu began to read *Fors Clavigera*. He reads it with such interest that he thinks he can draw upon it for subjects to be dealt with in his weekly letters to the Ashram.

In the course of conversation Bapu quoted a line from *Sarasvatichandra*† and said, "Govardhanram put forth

* They went on hunger strike as a protest against the matron's insulting behaviour. *Ed.*

† A great Gujarati novel. *Ed.*

all his powers in the first volume, which is very interesting with finely depicted characters. The second gives us a beautiful picture of Hindu society. In the third volume his energy begins to flag, and in the fourth he felt he must include in it everything else that he had to give to the world."

I said, "He could not write short stories, but Ravindranath Tagore writes short stories as well as novels."

Bapu said, "As for Tagore, we can never say enough about him. There is hardly a type of literature at which he has not tried his hand, and tried it with supreme success. We have not in our midst any other man so highly gifted as he, and I doubt whether there is any such man in all the world besides."

Vallabhbhai remarked, "What about his Shantiniketan? How is it going to fare, now that he is old and there is no one who can take his place?"

Bapu replied, "Yes, but one never can tell. When God has had the grace to send such a genius to flourish in our midst, He cannot have wished that the institution he has founded should come to grief."

Vallabhbhai said, "True, but who is going to replace him in all these various spheres of activity?"

I replied, "There are fine painters like Nandalal Bose and Asit Haldar. And then there is Vidhushekhar Shastri."

Vallabhbhai said, "You are right about painting. But what about the school? Khadi and the spinning wheel could in the absence of Bapu be looked after by even Dudabhai for instance. But where is the man upon whom Tagore's mantle could possibly fall?"

I said, "A man of religion said that Khadi and prohibition will be there even when other things about Bapu are forgotten."

Bapu observed, "That is because they appeal to the common people, and can also be managed by the common man."

This set me thinking as to who could take charge of the Ashram after Bapu. Who would admonish the Ashramites to be mindful of their observances day and night ? There are in the Ashram men, women and children of various temperaments, tastes and talents hailing from different parts of the country. God alone will look after them when Bapu is no more in their midst. There are so many unknown people fired by a faith in truth and non-violence and willing to lay down their lives for it, that there is no room for doubt, our obvious defects notwithstanding.

I then said, " It may be that men of high qualifications will now join Shantiniketan to continue Tagore's work even if they have not been attracted to it so far."

Bapu said, " You are right. Tagore in future will certainly attract able men if not now. At any rate Shantiniketan will continue to function. I should not be surprised if Elmhirst left England to work in that institution."

Vallabhbhai said, " I believe that our work will continue, for there is not much to think and understand about it."

Bapu said, " That reminds me of a sentence in Devadas's article in the *Leader* : 'It [spinning] is too simple to command attention and belief.' "

We then somehow began to talk about Meherbaba. Bapu said, " He is a remarkable man. He seeks nobody, but still people flock to him and place large funds at his disposal. He went to England and the U.S.A. upon being called to those countries. And there is no wonder he wields influence. He has been observing silence for seven years and still is perfectly sane. This alone is enough to attract people."

I asked Bapu, " What did you think of his book which he gave you to read ? "

Bapu replied, " There was nothing extraordinary about it. And it was written in English by a disciple, and not well arranged. I asked him to write in Gujarati or

Persian his mother-tongue and he liked my advice. For why should we write in a foreign language ? "

I said, " There is an air of happiness about his face."

Bapu said, " Certainly. And he asserts that he is always happy. He believes that he has had the beatific vision. He has never married and he says he is free from carnal thoughts. I have felt that he is a sincere man and no hypocrite."

This morning, while reading some book Bapu all of a sudden said : " Have you a copy of the Isha Upanishad ? The essence of philosophy is contained in its 18 verses or perhaps in the first verse. I would like to read it again and again, and to learn it by heart."

I said, " My father made me learn it by heart as a child. He read it from Nathuram Sharma's edition. My uncle was a disciple of Nathuram."

Bapu said, " Nathuram's book is a good one. His translation of the Upanishads is readable. He wielded considerable influence in his time."

I said, " My uncle was a strict disciplinarian. Under his regime, we could not get food so long as we had not offered *sandhya* prayers in the morning as well as evening."

Bapu said, " Nathuram's teaching had many good features, but in his latter days it deteriorated, as there was too much of show."

March 26, 1932

Commissioner Cadell visited our ward today. He asked for news of ' Mahadevrav ' Desai and said to Bapu, " Credit is due to the people for this that at present there is no bitterness in their struggle against Government." Bapu replied, " You may keep the credit and let us have the cash." Cadell then said that in his division 95 per cent. of the people did not know the Mahatma though they knew him. Apparently he did not feel that he was guilty of a lack of courtesy in making this last remark. He then said to me, " You have been kept here by Government to look after Gandhiji." I replied,

"It is difficult to say whether I look after him or he looks after me." Cadell said, "That Government has kept you three best brains together shows that they repose great confidence in you."

We received today all the letters received from Mirabehn during the last two weeks. We had been asking the Superintendent about them, but he did not tell us that the letters had actually arrived. Bapu was displeased with him, and said, "I can put up with everything but not with deception. If you are honest, you will find me easy to deal with. It will do even if you say that you cannot give us certain news. But I cannot stand lies." The Superintendent was taken aback and reassured Bapu on the subject.

There is an article with the caption 'What is Gandhi's religion?' in an American weekly *The Living Church*. It shows that Christian missionaries are not happy about Bapu's influence in Christian circles. The writer of the article, the Rev. Moody is an able man. He has been reading all about Bapu for the last eight years. He strongly criticizes those Christians who call Bapu a Christian or a Christ-like man or the Christ of modern times.

He says: "The Americans look at him without understanding him. Gandhi is not a Christian, makes no pretence of being so, and owes very little if anything to the teaching of Christ......I can have little in common with those among us who are trying to persuade America that Gandhi, a Hindu to the core, is really 'unconsciously Christian.'....Gandhi believed in 'non-violence' to every creature long before he ever heard of Christianity. It was part of his childhood faith. His mother taught it to him. The principle of *ahimsa* (non-violence) whereon he lays so much stress today is distinctly and beyond controversy a part of his Hindu heritage."

So far so good. He then makes the same remark about Bapu as Mahomed Ali, though in milder language:

"Let us be done with the idea that Christianity is the only religion that can produce good men. The question is: when other religions have done their best, can

Christianity at its best surpass them ? We believe so. Mr Gandhi is quite certainly a better Hindu than I am a Christian — that is, he practises his religion in a much better fashion than I do mine. He is probably as high a type as his religion can produce, while I am a very poor advertisement for mine. But that is not the question. It is not at all fair to judge the relative worth of Christianity and Hinduism by comparing Christians like me with Mr Gandhi. The real question is : can Christianity at its best produce a higher type of man than Hinduism ? If not, then we ought all to become Hindus. And if Hinduism can produce a type worthy to be compared with Christ himself, then why strive to make the Hindus Christian ? "

"......I would by no means seek to deny Gandhi is a 'great soul.' I believe that he is so. But from what knowledge I can get from my reading, I most certainly say that I do not think him as great a soul as very many of the Christian saints have been. I also fully believe that we have many better men in the Christian church today although their virtues have not been so highly publicized. The battles they are fighting are not of such a spectacular character, but demand a courage and a devotion not inferior to that which Gandhi exhibits in his political contest with the British Empire."

He then proceeds to accuse Christians like C. F. Andrews and J. H. Holmes of idolatry which "consists in giving to any person or to anything the place which belongs to our Lord."

The fact is that Christians like him look upon Jesus as God while the others do not share that view. Therefore they believe Bapu like Jesus to be a spark of the divine. The reverend gentleman thinks that Christian non-violence is superior to Bapu's "cow-protectionist" non-violence : "Christ said, 'Resist not evil,' while Gandhi teaches passive resistance. There is hatred at the back of Gandhi's non-violent resistance, while Christian non-violence is based on love" and so on. But he would not write these things if he met Bapu. The one great defect of his study is that he has no personal acquaintance with Bapu, and

no knowledge either of Bapu's views on Hinduism. Hence it is that he says, "Christ gave to the world a sublime moral religion; Gandhi gives to the world a new way to get your enemy down, and as his spiritual contribution recommends the especial veneration of the cow." The poor man does not know that Bapu's like Jesus's is a kingdom not of this world, and his non-violence embraces the whole universe. Bapu gives to the world not a 'new way to get your enemy down' but the method of converting your enemies into friends. And for Bapu the war against sin, the internal enemy, is far more important than the one that he wages against human adversaries.

Received a post card from Phulchand Shah in which he writes, "It is my good fortune that you remembered me. I closed the Dhrangadhra chapter according to my lights and am perfectly satisfied with the settlement arrived at. Now I am working according to God's guidance."

Bapu said, "He politely informs us that his path and ours are divergent."

I said, "He means that his Satyagraha is different from ours."

Bapu said, "That is quite clear. But his civility has led him to use suggestive language."

Bapu then related how, when he went to Ahmedabad in order to take his matriculation examination he put up with a gentleman recommended by his elder brother. "The good man came to the station to receive me and took me to his house in a hired *tanga* (single-horse carriage). He left me at the door and entered his house. Who was to pay the *tanga* fare? I asked the driver and paid him. After this mine host came back to me. He used the language of suggestion. The host was a miser, but fortunately for me Dvarkadas Patvari came and released me."

The *Tribune* reproduces an article about the Peshavar massacre from the pen of a correspondent of the *Daily Telegraph*. It contains an accurate description of the brazen-faced repression in the frontier city. Bapu said, "Here is full corroboration of our case. The writer admits that the British policy is one of sheer frightfulness."

The *New Leader* has a good article by Brailsford, in which he gives a graphic picture of the situation in India. The *Tribune* carries good articles on Benthall's secret circular and Iqbal's speech at the Muslim Conference. Bapu read them and said, "The *Tribune* is the best views-paper as the *Hindu* is by and large the best newspaper. The *Tribune* editor's reading and analysis of events are unsurpassed."

Bapu said, "Other Muslims too share Iqbal's anti-nationalism; only they do not give expression to their sentiments. The poet now disowns his song *Hindustan Hamara* (India is ours)." I asked, "Is not his pan-Islamism the same as Shaukat Ali and Mahomed Ali's?" Bapu said, "Yes, but this anti-nationalism has nothing to do with pan-Islamism. I may defend a Muslim's stand that he is a Muslim first and an Indian afterwards, for I myself say that I am a Hindu first and am therefore a true Indian. Mahomed Ali realized this. The present Muslim leadership do not understand 'I am a Muslim first' in the old sense. Nowadays to be a Muslim is not to be a nationalist."

We were shocked to hear about the death of Shri Dhirajlal, Shankarlal Banker's brother. It was because he attended to domestic affairs that Shankarlal was free to devote himself to service of the country. I was sad as his departure means an additional and painful load on Shankarlal's shoulders. Bapu sent him and Dhirajlal's widow a wire of condolence.

MARCH 27, 1932

Bapu takes no thought of himself but he is deeply worried about other people. For instance he tells me, "Why do not you prepare some good dishes for the Sardar? You know he has built high hopes on your coming here." And as regards Haridas Gandhi he almost delivered an ultimatum to Major Martin. Bapu wrote a letter to him requesting permission to write to other fellow-prisoners, but before it could be sent, Major Bhandari granted him this permission. Consequently Bapu wrote letters to Mirabehn, Kaka, Prabhudas, Mani, Jamnalalji and Devdas at once. He had

already written a letter to Mirabehn as he thought she must be eagerly waiting for it. But as he received two letters from her, he wrote her a second acknowledging receipt and requested the jailer to post it at once.

The Sardar cannot sleep well as the jail is infested with mosquitoes ; Bapu therefore wrote a note to the jailer suggesting that he should get a mosquito net at once, and asked the warder to hand it to the jailer at his own house though it was Sunday.

Bapu gets up during the night, and seeing that I often wake up at the sound of his wooden sandals, he puts on leather *chappals* and walks with a light step as far from my bed as possible.

Bapu would not order fruit from the bazar for himself but he does order it for Haridas who is in hospital.

This morning there was a discussion on the present situation. Bapu said, " I do not wish that there should be a settlement at present. The time for it is still not ripe. We are not ready for it. Many must still silently march to jails and bury themselves there. Government is rather unexpectedly dealing with me in a straightforward manner. I never thought they would be generous enough to permit me to write to prisoners. But perhaps they are influenced by our non-violence. Cadell who came here the other day is not a very wise man, but he does sometimes utter words of wisdom. When he said that there was no bitterness in our present campaign, he was only echoing the table-talk of the ruling class. The more non-violent we become, the greater will be the impression we make."

Vallabhbhai was discussing religion today. The Ramayan and the Mahabharat are not history in the same way as Shakespeare's *Julius Caesar* is not history. Rama and Krishna were big men in their time, but not perfect men. Their merits were multiplied tenfold and hundred-fold by their contemporary chroniclers. When a man performs a meritorious act, the people will always magnify it. That is what has happened as regards the *avataras* (incarnations of God) in India as well as Jesus and Muhammad. I referred to the article of the American

missionary. Upon this Bapu said, "I have never said that Hinduism at its best produces a higher type of man than say Christianity. Therefore the Hindu does not consider any other man's religion as inferior to his own and try to convert him. Christians look upon Christ as God, and think it idolatry to institute a comparison between Christ and any other person or to ascribe to anybody else the special attributes of Christ. Muslims do not look upon Muhammad as God and consider it idolatry to think of any person or thing as God. However they are idolatrous worshippers of the Prophet. And God being immanent in the entire universe inanimate as well as animate, the question of deifying any person or thing does not arise. Every person has something of the divine in him. Some have more of it, while others have less. That American has no understanding of *ahimsa* or the implications of Christ's words, 'Resist not evil.' 'Love thy enemies' is the positive aspect of non-resistance. The words 'Resist evil by good' do not occur anywhere in the Bible as you think."

The *Tribune* today carried a fine article on the Muslim Conference. After hearing it read Bapu said, "Long live Kalinath Roy. His articles nowadays on the communal problem and on joint electorates for Harijans bear witness to his deep knowledge and wide experience."

Bapu wrote to Emerson, drawing his attention to Bombay Government's statement that confiscated lands would be sold and never given back, and reminding him that when last year truce terms were being discussed, Lord Irwin had said that if such a contingency arose in the future lands should not be sold at all. Was Government going to dissipate all goodwill? It should at least refrain from doing things for which it would be cursed by posterity or for which it might repent in the future but in vain. Were enmities to be handed down from generation to generation?

I asked Bapu if this letter should be marked 'personal.' Bapu said yes. The Sardar then remarked, "What does it matter if it is not so marked, and if some

one else reads it? Whoever reads it will say, 'These Satyagrahis are an impudent lot. They will not give rest to themselves even in jail.'"

Baldwin's lecture in King's College on the secret of happiness has been reproduced by the *Bombay Chronicle* from the *Manchester Guardian*. That a surgeon like Sir Alfred Fripp should leave money by will for a lecture to be delivered every year on happiness and success in life is a remarkable thing. The lecture is full of fine sentences with winged words in them. Instead of describing happiness Baldwin disposes of it as the Upanishads dispose of Brahma (God) by saying 'Not this, not this' (*Neti, neti*), as Brahma is bliss. And he closes the lecture with this excellent peroration:

"Happiness may be the echo of virtue in the soul, it is certainly a harmony in the mind. It may radiate from beggars and gypsies, lords of the universe who own no service to fame and fortune. It may be the beatific vision of the holiest saints or the insight of the greatest thinkers in the art of apprehending reality."

Still the Indian definition of happiness is not to be beaten: "Whatever depends upon others is misery, and all that depends upon oneself is* happiness." *Bon mots* of Goethe are being quoted in connection with his centenary. This one corresponds to our definition: "Everything that frees our spirit without giving us self-mastery is pernicious." Compare the Gita III: 17, यस्त्वात्मरतिरेव स्यात् । (he who revels in the Self) and VI: 21, 22 सुखमात्यन्तिकं यत्तद् . . . यं लब्ध्वा चापरं लाभं मन्यते नाधिकं ततः । (endless bliss, where he holds no other gain greater than that which he has gained). The briefest and simplest definition of happiness is to live for the happiness of others and to see others happy.

Romain Rolland in a letter to an American friend recalls the meeting between St. Dominic and St. Francis in connection with Bapu's visit to him in Switzerland. Who is the modern Dominic? Rolland or Bapu? It was Dominic who

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* यद्यत्परवशं दुःखं यद्यदात्मवशं सुखम् ।

went and saw Francis, but Bapu has more in common with Francis than with Dominic. The letter is full of light touches and it may be that this comparison is only superficial, but to compare oneself to Dominic or Francis implies great self-confidence and consciousness of one's own purity. I think St.Francis was the very image of austerity (*tapas*) while Dominic was युक्ताहारविहार: कर्मसु युक्तचेष्ट: युक्तस्वप्नावबोध: (Gita VI : 17) 'disciplined in food and recreation, in effort in all activities and in sleep and waking.' But who can say that Francis was not a *yogi* too?

Enjoyment as well as renunciation, attachment as well as detachment is in evidence in Goethe's life, but at last he seeks release in renunciation and detachment, being fed up with enjoyment and attachment, and tells us that there is always hope for those who strive:

'Who has not cut his bread with sorrow,
Who hasn't spent the midnight hours
Weeping and watching for tomorrow,
He knows you not, ye heavenly powers!'

MARCH 28, 1932

As regards Sarojini Devi's visit to Banaras Bapu thinks Malaviyaji must have called her there, and that their five hours' talk was devoted to the subject of holding a session of Congress. If the British Government have declared Congress to be an unlawful body, why not hold a session of it and go to jail on that issue? We need not wonder if some such idea has occurred to them.

As regards working the future constitution Bapu said, "We can only reach a decision after we have seen what it is like. I said in England and say even in India that if it does not transfer real power, its imposition should be strongly resisted; on the other hand if it does transfer power, we should capture the legislatures. That would be even my death-bed message." Vallabhbhai said, "You have brought us here, and must not now think of proceeding further all alone."

Bapu is reading Ruskin's *Fors Clavigera* with great interest and says, "We may read this book a number of

times and yet never be tired of it. And each time we shall learn from it something new."

I instituted a comparison between Ruskin and Tolstoy and said, "Tolstoy gave up living the life of an artist and then devoted himself to service. He did not write any more artistic books, bringing out only simple books which would raise the intellectual and moral standards of the common people. In the same way Ruskin at first was an artist, and wrote *Modern Painters, Stones of Venice* and other books. Later on he felt that the appreciation of beauty is all very well, but it is impossible so long as one lives in the midst of misery, poverty, and internal dissensions. He therefore dipped his pen in blood and tears, and wrote *Unto This Last* with the result that he was criticized in the same way as Tolstoy was." Bapu observed, "This resemblance holds good only to a limited extent, for while Tolstoy condemned his former literary activity, Ruskin crowned it with *Unto This Last* and *Fors Clavigera*." I said, "Tolstoy was a revolutionary. He therefore transformed his own life, while Ruskin rested content with the expression of ideas." Bapu said, "That is a very great difference. Ruskin was not converted as Tolstoy was." Vallabhbhai said, "But no one in England now even mentions Ruskin." Bapu replied, "You are right, but Ruskin can never be forgotten. A time is coming when those who did not listen to Ruskin and neglected him will turn to him." *

MARCH 29, 1932

Sir Samuel Hoare's *The Fourth Seal* deals with his experiences in Russia during the World War. Its General Staff was badly organized and enjoyed frequent holidays. "Even when the Department was working, the hours were uncertain and it was never easy to make an appointment with a Russian colleague. I remember, for instance, that at the time of my arrival the Quarter-Master General, the senior officer of the General Staff, made a common habit of arriving at his office at about eleven at

* For two letters written on the 28th see *Selected Letters*, First Series, XXXVIII and XXXIX. *Ed.*

night, and of working until seven or eight the next morning. For those of us who worked by day such a mode of life made co-operation difficult.

"What, I wondered, would the arch-organizers of London have thought of all these things if they had seen them? How would this haphazard existence have struck the methodical staff officers, the well-drilled typists, the card-index experts and all that great army that had made the London machine a byword for efficiency of office management? The longer I stayed in Russia, the more rigidly became crystallized the idea, that had long been flitting about my mind, that no one else was fighting the war as we were fighting it.*.... From time to time even the routine work of the office was completely held up by the lack of departmental order. Once for example the Alexandrovsk cable, the cable over which our telegrams passed, went out of action for ten days, and although I continued to send several messages a day during the period, no one thought fit to tell me what had happened. As I was receiving no wires from London, I at last became anxious, and upon making inquiries discovered that the telegraph authorities had withheld all information from me on the ground that it would worry me to know that my wires were being held up." †

After describing Roger Casement's 'vagaries', — wearing the thickest of Irish homespuns in a temperature of 100° in the shade and no shoes or socks, wayward and obstinate beyond belief, — he says: "Yet, when full discount has been made for all these vagaries, his name deserves a place amongst the men who hated cruelty and fought oppression. Without his intervention the rubber scandals of the Congo and Putumayo would have continued unchecked, and whole tribes of unresisting natives would have continued to be tortured and massacred. The tragedy was that this Don Quixote of the nineteenth century persuaded himself into the belief that England oppressed

* Sir Samuel Hoare: *The Fourth Seal* (Heinemann), 1930, p. 50.
† *Ibid*, pp. 55-56.

Ireland as the rubber merchants oppressed the natives, and that having made this phantasy an article of faith, he was impelled into a line of action that led to a traitor's death." *

Referring to the Tsar he says: "Was it conceivable that any one should wish to kill the modest and conscientious gentleman with whom I had been talking? Yet upon the evidence of his public record I suppose that a black case could be made out against him. He sacrificed his friends, he showed few generous impulses in the conduct of affairs, he let the ship of state drift on to the rocks, a rudderless wreck. None the less, and admitting all his faults, I am convinced that he was a good man and that history will appeal against the partially considered verdict of today. For history judges *in foro conscientiae* and in that court intentions no less than achievements are admitted as evidence. If he sacrificed his Russian friends, he never abandoned his Allies in arms. If he stumbled and hesitated in the field of government, he never wavered in his steadfastness in the orthodox faith. A loving father, a devoted husband, a veritable slave in the routine service of his state, he will be remembered amongst the unfortunate princes who were meant, like Henry VI, to rule quiet kingdoms in quiet times, and whose excellent intentions were overwhelmed by an upheaval of overpowering force." †

Here are pictures of the Russian people's devotion to the Orthodox Faith:

"The Cathedral as usual was packed and except for the lamps on the shrines, at first completely dark. Then as the service went on, every one lit candles. No one except Johnny and I had books, and how the people packed as close as can be imagined are able to stand for four or five hours on end I cannot imagine. The service took the form of a funeral service round the catafalque, in this case a pall." ‡

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* *Ibid*, p. 63.

† *Ibid*, pp 175-76.

‡ *Ibid*, p. 264.

"Several of them (service books in a bookshop of the Old Believers or Raskolniks) were filled with apolcalyptic blessings and curses, and were illustrated with many strange pictures of angels and devils. The volumes were beautifully produced, well-bound in traditional leather covers, closed by silver clasps, printed in Slavonic type, the plates arranged and coloured in a way that would have done credit to the presses of Oxford and Cambridge...... The prices were high and I was amazed when I saw a peasant in a sheepskin coat with straw in his boots enter the shop and produce fifty roubles for two Apocalypses. When we entered into conversation with him, he told us that he had been saving up his money for a long time in order to buy two of the best illustrated editions...... Believers such as he represented the simple faith and rigid conservatism of millions of men and women scattered from one end of Russia to the other." *

Admiral Kolchak threw away into the sea the sword which he had won in Japan and which the Bolsheviks wanted to take from him. He was tried by the Bolsheviks.

The final scene took place at Irkutsk, where the Bolsheviks went through the form of a trial. I give the account of it in the words of witnesses whose evidence is on record, says Sir Samuel.

'How did he hold himself at the examination?' the judge was asked at a subsequent inquiry.

'He held himself like a prisoner of war, the commander of an army which had lost the campaign, and from this point of view he held himself with complete dignity. He would not compromise his friends.'

When he was condemned to death he faced the court with the question, "Is it a judicial sentence or a military act?"

When the firing party arrived he traced with his foot "Good-bye" in the snow, lit a cigarette and prepared himself for death.

'For all these he was a hero', the judge admitted.

'Even for his executioner?'

* *Ibid*, pp. 268-69.

'Why, certainly.'

In due course the news of his death reached Moscow, and a man in the street insulted his memory.

'You should not speak against Kolchak,' shouted another. 'He fought against us, he had to be exterminated but he was a fine fellow.'

When groundless charges were made against him for the cruelties that had been committed in the civil war, Lenin brushed them aside with the answer, 'It is stupid to blame Kolchak. This is the vulgar defence of democracy. Kolchak worked with the means that he found.' *

After this there is a fine portrait of Princess Elizabeth of Hesse Darmstadt, the wife of Grand Duke Serge of Russia.

Her father the Grand Duke Louis IV of Hesse Darmstadt was a German and her mother Princess Alice of England. Their family life was simpler, stricter and more domestic than that of other well-managed families. They had four daughters one of whom was Elizabeth. A younger daughter was married to the Tsar Nicholas. Serge was an uncle of Nicholas. Sir Samuel Hoare met Elizabeth as a nun, the foundress and Mother Superior of Martha and Mary Convent. "When I left the Grand Duchess I felt that we had met not only a saint but one of the great benefactresses of Christendom. Dispensaries, hospitals, rescue homes, schools, centres for the training of nurses and the treatment of tuberculosis, even a service of messenger boys for the employment of orphans, all had grown up under the inspiration of this noble lady." †

But why did the princess take the veil? She had a happy married life. Tsar Alexander II the father of Grand Duke Serge, the liberator of the serfs, was killed by a nihilist. He was succeeded by Nicholas under whom Serge became Governor of Moscow. After Russia's defeat at the hands of Japan he advised Nicholas to let the people have an elected legislature out of generosity and not because the people were too powerful for him and he

* *Ibid*, pp. 305-6.

† *Ibid*, p. 314.

should bow to their will. Upon this advice being disregarded, Serge resigned his high office and was about to leave Moscow, when he was assassinated by a terrorist. His wife Elizabeth was preparing to go to a depot in the Manchurian army for relief work, when she heard an explosion. " The windows were still rattling as she rushed into the Kremlin square to find the splinters of the carriage, the wounded coachman, and the remains of her dead husband." (*Ibid*, p. 317)

Hoare gives heart-rending details of how the assassination was plotted and carried out. One of the assassins was an *agent provocateur*. In a memorable passage Hoare writes :

" Were there really such infamous wretches as *agents provocateurs* ? Were they not merely the invention of guilty or disordered brains ? Their work seemed so diabolically complicated, the risk so staggering, the reward so improbable, that I could with difficulty bring myself to believe in their existence. Why should police agents engineer terrorist outrages ? The wish to win importance in police circles did not seem to be a reasonable explanation of the career of these double-crossed traitors. Sooner or later they were certain to be exposed, and even supposing that they escaped execution or assassination, what permanent reward could they expect that would not embroil them with one side or the other ? To these questions I have never obtained satisfactory answers. But I satisfied myself on dependable evidence that these men actually existed, and that the most notorious of them was Azev, the sinister traitor who instigated the Grand Duke's murder." (*Ibid*, p. 318)

With Azev there were two accomplices. One of these was Kalaev. " A young enthusiast, a visionary, a poet, how came this boy with big sad eyes and a dreamer's smile into the terrible company of Azev and threw the bomb ? His family were poor and law-abiding, his father a Warsaw policeman and one of the few who would never take a bribe, his brothers hard-working labourers. He joined St.Petersburg University where there was the usual

sequence of events — suspicion, expulsion, police supervision, banishment to Ekaterinburg, escape and furtive journeys to Western Europe. The University course was blighted. The iron had entered his soul, and step by step he drifted into the ranks of the Social Revolutionaries until eventually he became one of the most active members of the Council of Action. He was a believer and disapproved of his comrades' atheism. Though the world had treated him harshly he bore no personal hatred against any one. Though his fellows were engaged in a programme of ruthless destruction, he scorned the name of anarchist, and refused to throw the bomb when the Grand Duchess was in the carriage with her husband. Serge was to him not a tyrant that he hated but an obstruction in the path that was leading to the world of his dreams.

'We are the knights of the spirit,' he told his friends. 'We are fighting for a new world. We are creating the future.' Serge meant the past, and the page of the past had to be destroyed.

After the outrage the Grand Duchess visited him in prison. Her husband, a strict observer of the orthodox practice, had often enjoined upon her the obligation of a holy death. A practising Christian should so order his affairs as to die at peace with God and man. Remembering these convictions she felt it her duty to bring Kalaev to repentance before he died. She went therefore to the prison and pleaded with him soul to soul.

Was there ever a more moving encounter? On the one hand, the beautiful widow, praying the murderer to repent, leaving her Bible with him, exhorting him in the name of Christian charity. On the other, the revolutionary dreamer, convinced that he had carried out a mission from Heaven, certain that he was leaving the world better for the blood that he had shed and the sacrifice that he was prepared to offer.

The door of the cell was unlocked and the Grand Duchess entered alone. With a look of astonishment Kalaev asked his visitor who she was and why she had come.

'I am his widow,' she replied. 'Why did you kill him?'

'I did not want to kill you,' he said. 'Several times I saw him when I had the bomb in my hand. But you were with him, and I spared him.'

'Did you not think that you were killing me together with him? Did you not realize the horror of the crime that you were committing?'

When she pressed her Bible into his hands, he offered her in return a copy of his journal. 'If I read the Bible that you have left me, you must read the journal in which I say that I am determined to destroy every one who stands in the way of our ideal.'

They parted, and the young man went unflinchingly to his death. Between the two was the outward gulf that separates the murderer from the victim. Perhaps, however, in the inner heart of the man, for he was not an atheist, there was a closer bond of sympathy with the Christian woman who had called him to repentance than he would ever admit to the guards who surrounded his cell.

'The Grand Duchess' so he told his Judges, 'can testify how heart to heart I laid bare my soul to her in spite of my confusion when I found myself talking with her.' (*Ibid*, pp. 320-23)

Look at Hoare's picture of the third terrorist which follows; I wonder how its painter cannot enter into the feelings of the terrorists of Bengal:

"Of all the Russians whom I have met, none has left upon me a more definite impression than this mysterious man — Boris Savinkov, a thinker whose logic made havoc of conventions, a penetrating writer with an uncannily sensitive touch, a resolute adventurer whose hand was in every plot — few could resist the spell of this untiring conspirator.

"He and his brother were at the University of St.Petersburg when with many others, they were arrested by the police at a demonstration in the Kazan Square. The young men were probably doing nothing more than the London medical students who from time to time go

shouting down the Strand. But in St.Petersburg this insignificant comedy soon developed into unrelieved tragedy. The father, who had been a judge, lost his post and died insane, the elder brother was sent to Siberia where he committed suicide, and Boris only avoided execution by escaping from prison. A big crowd, a little noise, and the wild spirits of two university students had thrown a happy family into a relentless machine that smashed their home and turned the surviving son on to the streets with hatred in his heart and a bomb in his pocket." (*Ibid*, pp. 323-24)

For more than ten years Savinkov's hand was in many a terrible affair, but "as the years passed, his quick and sensitive mind grew discontented with the conventional catchwords of his fellow-conspirators. What, he asked himself, was to be gained by all this bloodshed? Was it right to kill or was it right not to kill? If it was right to kill, was there any difference between murder and killing in war? If it was not right to kill, war, ordinary murder and the killing of Grand Dukes were equally wrong. These doubts and searchings of the heart he has himself vividly described in two very remarkable books, *The Pale Horse*, and *The Tale of What Was Not*."

At the time of the murder of the Grand Duke he was evidently passing through this crisis of mind.... Like many other Russian revolutionaries he was moving to the right. Later on he threw his whole weight against the Bolshevik movement. He was once in the same train as Hoare; "the same quick, sensitive, intellectual almost cat-like in his versatility." He was afterwards betrayed by some woman. He went to Russia where he was prosecuted, betrayed his former associates, "recanted his anti-Soviet opinions and threw himself from the prison window and committed suicide according to Bolshevik communiques. Those who knew him best will not believe this improbable story." (*Ibid*, pp. 324-25)

Hoare now resumes the story of the Grand Duchess who sold her jewellery, keeping nothing for herself, not even her wedding ring, and gave a third of the proceeds to

the Russian Crown, the other thirds to relations and her own charities. She left the palace and founded the Sisterhood at Moscow and the Martha and Mary community which was an extraordinary institution. "Whilst prayer and meditation were given their full place in the day's routine, and the hours, fasts and festivals were rigorously observed, the spirit of the community was the spirit of activity and general usefulness. Few of the hundreds of sisters who joined took perpetual vows. The Grand Duchess herself took the vows, but among the sisters and novices not more than a score were under any perpetual obligation. There were among them princesses and women from the professional and peasant classes. One young peasant woman had obtained the Cross of St.George in the Japanese war, having fought attired as a soldier and rescued her colonel in the face of enemy fire, and when she joined the sisterhood, hung on the wall of her cell her Cross with its black and yellow ribbon."

The activities of this convent covered a wide range. The doctors came to regard the Sisters' Hospital for desperate cases as the best in the city, and the Grand Duchess herself as a most skilful and sympathetic nurse. The charitable knew her Rescue Home to be one of the most efficient in Europe, and a regular stream of donations flowed for its upkeep.

"Thanks to her example, the social conscience of Moscow was awakened, when it became known that she had founded a home for incurable consumptives of the poorest class and was regularly visiting dying patients.... Her beautiful character, so her closest friends told me, glowed even more brightly in her meditations and in the ascetic life that she unceasingly observed. After a long day of incessant work, she would spend the night in contemplation, or in the exacting services of the Orthodox Church. If she slept at all, it was on a wooden bed without a mattress; and as to food she had long since renounced everything but milk, eggs, vegetables and bread....She exemplified in her own life the union of the duties of Martha and Mary." (*Ibid*, pp. 326-29)

During the Japanese War the Grand Duchess discovered the misappropriation of Red Cross supplies and insisted upon accurate receipts being sent to every donor.

In the World War anti-German rioters wished to attack her convent as a centre of enemy activities, although she was doing every kind of war work. But the Mayor of Moscow went to the convent and prevented the rioters from burning the institution. Elizabeth always gave good advice to the Empress her sister, who being under the influence of Rasputin mostly disregarded it.

During the 1917 Revolution the Moscow mob once more attacked the convent. Prisons had been opened, and convicts gathered round the community building with a view to seize Elizabeth as a German spy. That brave woman went out alone to talk to the men and said, 'Come in and take what you want. There are no weapons concealed or German spies hidden here. If there are, search for them and take them away by all means. But let only five of you come in.'

The rioters shouted, 'Dress yourself to come with us.'

Elizabeth quietly replied, 'I am the Mother Superior of the convent. I must make final arrangements and say a good-bye to my sisters.'

She then asked all the sisters to assemble in the Church and five men from the mob to put down their arms in the entrance and come in. She led these men to the cross. They followed her and kissed the cross too. 'Now go and search for whatever you think you will find.' The men looked here and there, came out and said, 'It is a convent and nothing more.' (*Ibid*, pp. 330-332)

But the tragedy was only at its beginning.

The Tsar had fled away and a Provisional Government been established. Its representatives came and asked Elizabeth to retire to the Kremlin as they could not otherwise be responsible for her safety.

With set purpose she had given her life to the community and her answer was that on no account would she leave it. 'I did not come out of the Kremlin to be

driven back into it by a revolutionary force. If it is difficult for you to protect me, please do not attempt it.'

She continued to nurse soldiers, comfort dying old women, relieve the poor and pray fervently. At the very time when the Bolsheviks were engaged in expelling the Provisional Government, she wrote to a friend as follows :

'One must fix one's thoughts first on the heavenly country in order to see things in their true light, and to be able to say, Thy will be done, when one sees the complete destruction of our beloved Russia. . . . I am only certain that the God who chastises is the same God who loves. . . . Think of a storm ; there are some things sublime in it, some things terrifying, some are afraid to take shelter, some are killed by it, and some have their eyes opened to the greatness of God ; is not this a true picture of the present times ? We work, we pray, we hope, and each day we feel more the Divine Compassion. It is a constant miracle that we are alive.' (*Ibid*, pp. 333-4)

The Bolsheviks triumphed at last, and a detachment of the Red Army surrounded the Martha and Mary Convent. . . . The Officer Commanding ordered Elizabeth to leave the community and join the Imperial family at Ekaterinburg. She sought permission to say good-bye to her sisters but in vain. She was taken to the station, put into a train and taken to Ekaterinburg, where she was in prison with the Tsar and Tsaritsa for some days. The Imperial family were murdered on July 17th and Elizabeth on the 18th. These were her last words : 'Father, forgive them, for they know not what they do.' (*Ibid*, pp. 334-336)

MARCH 30, 1932

This morning we happened to talk about a certain Muslim leader. Vallabhbhai said, " He too took a narrow communal view in time of crisis and asked for a separate relief fund for Muslims and a separate appeal for it." Bapu said, " He is not at fault on that score. What is he to do if we create such an environment for him ? What amenities do we offer Muslims ? They are mostly treated like untouchables. If I wished to send Amtul Salam to Devlali, could I ask — to

put her up? The fact is that we should not go to the Bhatia sanatorium or for that matter any other place which excludes Amtul or any one else. Indeed it is up to the Hindus to take a step forward. As it is, the bitterness is increasing. It can be mitigated only if the Hindus wake up and break down the barriers they have erected. Perhaps the barriers were needed at a certain time, but now there is no earthly use for them." Vallabhbhai said, "But the manners and customs of Muslims are different. They take meat while we are vegetarians. How are we to live with them in the same place?" Bapu replied, "No, sir. Hindus as a body are nowhere vegetarians except in Gujarat. Almost every Hindu takes meat in the Punjab, Uttar Pradesh and Sindh.... All at present are on their trial. Let us wait and see, with faith that all will be well in the end."

The Civil Surgeon examined Bapu, and placing the stethoscope on his chest said, "I would be proud to possess a heart like that." So saying he passed on to other prisoners. Bapu did not tell him about the pain in his fingers. He examined my leg but had no treatment to suggest. It seemed as if he wanted to finish an unpleasant task somehow or other. No other Civil Surgeon went away like this without wanting to have a word with Bapu. This one is capable of amazing self-restraint.

Sir John Anderson has come with testimonials from all. I showed to Bapu Laski's remarks about him. Bapu said, "Perhaps that is true. If so he will capture Bengali hearts, win over Subhas Bose and Sengupta and disregard Congress. The same fate is perhaps in store for the Punjab. I do not think there will be peace in all parts of India at the same time. I imagine they will pacify one province after another."

Bapu compelled me to sleep in the open from today and asked the Major for a cot for me.

The Major said, "Thirty or forty women prisoners all want to write to you. What shall I do about it? Would it not do if they just sent you their signatures?" Bapu replied, "If you wish, I will ask them to be satisfied with

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writing only a couple of lines each. Why deprive them of this satisfaction ? They are all so gentle."

MARCH 31, 1932

The London letter in today's *Leader* was excellent. Polak generally is over-moderate, but this time he has written strongly about events in India, such as Ba being given C class and then A, and an eighty year old woman being arrested in Karachi. "Ba is Bapu's wife; therefore she was promoted to A class. Any other 60 year old woman in her place would have remained in C class. And Samuel is skating while all this is happening in India. Let Samuel beware lest the analogy of the caravan marching in spite of dogs barking recoils upon him and the Indian caravan marches so far that the situation cannot be retrieved at all."

Bapu said, "This is like what happened in the case of Phirozeshah Mehta. He did not think much of our struggle in South Africa, but when he heard about Ba's arrest, his blood boiled and he delivered his famous speech in the Town Hall at Bombay. Polak too evidently could not bear the treatment accorded to Ba."

Vallabhbhai said, "Not only Polak but every one else would have the same sort of feeling. Ba is the very image of *ahimsa* (non-violence). I have not noticed such *ahimsa* on the face of any other woman. Ba's humility and simplicity are astonishing."

Bapu said, "You are right, Vallabhbhai, but Ba's greatest virtue in my opinion is her courage. She is cross, she is angry, she is envious, but taking her whole career from South African days to date, it is her courage that is outstanding."

While examining the proofs of the school edition of the autobiography, I asked Bapu, "In connection with the austerities of your mother, you have used the word saintliness. Don't you think austerity here would be more appropriate ?"

Bapu replied, "No. I have used the word saintliness deliberately. Austerity implies external renunciation, endurance and sometimes even hypocrisy. But saintliness

is an inner quality of the soul. My mother's austerity was only an echo of her inner life. If you notice any purity in me, I have inherited it from my mother, and not from my father. Mother died at the early age of forty. I have been a witness of her behaviour in the flower of youth, but never did I see in her any frivolity, any recourse to beauty aids or interest in the pleasures of life. The only impression she ever left on my mind is that of saintliness."

APRIL 1, 1932

A pet cat in the jail bakery has had two kittens. These are now out on their own. The cat often comes and nestles near Bapu's bare tender feet. Yesterday morning she brought the kittens into our ward, and one of them began to play. It would take the cat's tail for a mouse, come running from far, take the tail in its mouth and bite it. The cat would withdraw its tail, but as soon as she kept it again in its natural condition, the whole game would start again. Bapu stopped reading Ruskin and watched the cat and its kitten for some time.

Rasulmia and two Maharashtra prisoners from the camp jail met us today. Bapu talked with them so long that he missed his afternoon nap and was late with his spinning. Received the women prisoners' letter. They are all well and fill their days with useful labour.

We happened to talk about Ambedkar. Bapu said, "Till I went to England, I did not know that he was a Harijan. I thought he was some Brahman who took deep interest in Harijans and therefore talked intemperately." Vallabhbhai said he knew he was a Harijan, as he had made his acquaintance when the Harijan leader toured Gujarat with Thakkar. Then we turned to Thakkar Bapa and the Servants of India Society's attitude to Harijans. Bapu said, "Their attitude is responsible for the shape that question has assumed nowadays. I noticed this when I lived in the Poona home of the Society in 1915 after the death of Gokhale. I asked Devadhar for a brief note on their activities, so that I would see what I could do. This note advised that we should deliver speeches before Harijan

meetings, and create in them a consciousness of the injustice done to them by Hindu society. I said to Devadhar, 'Here you give me a stone when I asked you for bread. We cannot serve Harijans in this fashion. It is not service, but patronage pure and simple. Who are we to uplift Harijans? We can only atone for our sin against them or discharge the debt we owe to them, and this we can do only by adopting them as equal members of society, and not by haranguing to them.' At this Sastri was taken aback and said, 'We did not expect that you would speak in such a magisterial tone.' And Hari Narayan Apte was very angry. I said to him, 'I am afraid you will make Harijans rise in rebellion against society.' Apte replied, 'Yes, let there be a rebellion. That is just what I want.' In this way there was a lot of discussion, so that the next day I said to Sastri, Devadhar, Apte and others that I had no idea I would cause them pain. This apology left a good impression on their minds. And afterwards we pulled on well together." Vallabhbhai said, "You can work in harmony with everybody. It does not cost you any effort. Vaniks (merchants) do not mind humbling themselves."

April 2, 1932

I needed a roller in order to prepare *rotlis* (unleavened bread) and tried to get it from the jail kitchen but in vain. Thereupon the warder said, "Please use a round glass bottle today. I will see that you get a wooden roller tomorrow." Vallabhbhai said, "So they will make us prepare *rotlis* with a bottle." Bapu said, "To tell you the truth, Vallabhbhai, good *rotlis* can be made with a bottle." Bapu had tried his hand at this too.

I asked him, "Did you always have a cook in your house before you removed to Phoenix?" "No," replied Bapu. "The last cook we had left because I would not let him use chillies. After that we managed without a cook. Cooking, washing clothes, cleaning the lavatories, grinding grain, — everything was done by members of the family. We had a hand-mill made of steel which cost £6. It could be worked not by one but by two

persons. Working at it was the first thing I did in the morning and I would take any one who was available as my fellow-worker. We had to stand as we worked, and in a quarter of an hour we had sufficient flour for the day, fine or coarse just as we pleased."

The cultivators of Bardoli paid their taxes and at the same time apologized for previous non-payment, garlanded the Commissioner and cried, '*Sarkar-ki jai*' (Victory to Government)! Vallabhbhai said, "Let us write to Government that now that they have won a victory there is no need to keep us in prison any longer." Bapu said, "Right you are."

APRIL 3, 1932

Muriel Lester's letters always put us in mind of our visit to England. If she is not guilty of exaggeration, — and it seems she is not, — Bapu's stay in England has exerted some influence over the common people.

Miss Maud Royden and Crozier are preparing to send a Satyagraha 'battalion' to stop the Sino-Japanese war. Muriel reports that 600 persons have offered their services for the purpose. This is an important piece of news. I imagine this is a result of Bapu's peace propaganda. Bapu welcomed the idea but remarked, "If we were fighting in India with arms, these 600 good people would come down to stop the battle. Nothing but force has an appeal for them."

APRIL 4, 1932

Bapu wrote as well as dictated many letters* today, of which 52 were sent to Ashramites and 7 to others.

To an American who offered to obtain his release on condition that he devoted himself entirely to propagating the teaching of Christ Bapu replied,

"I thank you for your letter. My answer to your first question is that I would not like anybody to get me out, and certainly not on any condition. I cannot give up, for

* For some of them see *Selected Letters*, First Series, XL—XLIV. *Ed.*

any consideration whatsoever, what I regard as my life's mission."

Premabehn informed Bapu that everyone in the Ashram at present was keen on exercise, for had not Bapu taught them that whatever they did, they must do it with a will? Bapu wrote in reply: "I do not think the Ashram deserves the testimonial you give it. Ashramites are not engrossed in whatever they take in hand. For how far have we succeeded in keeping the Ashram *observances? We had planned to learn Hindi, Urdu, Tamil, Telugu, and Sanskrit, but our attempt to master any of them has been less than half-hearted. We do not know the art of tanning nor can we spin fine yarn, and so on about other subjects. This much is enough to support my contention. All can take to *lathi* play as to sweetmeats. There are a number of things in the world the pursuit of which involves no labour. We belong to the animal kingdom also; therefore we take to some things like fish to water. A taste for them has not to be cultivated. The question is whether it is worth while to cultivate it. It is not as if all the qualities of animals are to be shunned.

"I like the Upanishads, but I do not think I am competent to write a commentary on them.

"One who asks his friends to point out his defects is out only to hear himself praised by them, for friendship is either incapable of observing defects or looks upon defects as if they were qualities. Friends occasionally point out our faults, but only in order to make us progress towards perfection. I once described you as hysterical, but that also was meant as praise, for if you were not hysterical, you were likely to be guilty of something more serious."

The list of letters sent today was prepared by the Sardar as I was not there at the time. He salvaged one half of a piece of paper and said, "Why should we not save it for a future occasion?" Bapu replied, "It would be fine indeed if you learnt thrift from me."

* For these observances see *From Yeravda Mandir* and *Ashram Observances in Action*, both by Gandhiji. *Ed.*

The Sardar was unaware that this last observation implied friendly criticism. It was related to something that Bapu told me this evening : "Mahadev, this is between you and me. I suggest that you keep your eye as well as control on things that are ordered for us from outside. I have noticed for sometime their number is on the increase. I can never lose sight of the fact that it is our money that is being spent. By all means get what is necessary for Vallabhbhai's health, but there must be a clearly understood limit."

APRIL 5, 1932

The National Week commences tomorrow. Therefore cotton was to be carded today. I asked Bapu if the *tant* (carding gut) was a good one and how often it snapped while he was carding. He replied, "It never snaps if we are careful. It snapped when Shankarlal and Kaka carded, but with me it lasted for any number of days. It all depends upon the attention you give to your work. Take my loin-cloth for instance. I put it on with care. If any one else had worn it, he would have torn it long ago."

Vallabhbhai said, "It looks as if you never wore it and kept it on a peg!"

Bapu replied, "That is so."

Care and vigilance are the keynote of Bapu's life. As I observe him, I often remember Kabir's * lines, दास कबीर जतन कर ओढी, ज्योंकी त्यों धर दीनी चदरियाँ। Who has seen to the purity of his mind and body for 35 years as Bapu has?

APRIL 6, 1932

Sardar was weighed today, his weight being $136\frac{1}{2}$ lbs., the same as before. I weighed 148 lbs., one pound less than before, while Bapu weighing $103\frac{1}{2}$ had lost two pounds and a half. Bapu accounted for this by saying that as he was fasting today, he had not taken honey, bread, almonds and water. And the Major agreed with him.

* 'Kabir, the servant of God, used the garment in the shape of his body with care and at death laid it down as white as snow.' *Ed.*

The Ashram post was considerably heavy this week. The children's letters are a pretty picture of their growing minds.

The Sardar is anxious about the Congress session proposed to be held in Delhi. He said, "It will distract the people's attention for nothing and lead them to neglect essential tasks. The weaklings will fall a prey to their own fancies and go about saying that there must be something in it as the session is sponsored by Malaviyaji. Others will postpone everything till they have paid a fruitless visit to Delhi. On the whole this move will do us only harm." Bapu replied, "I do not think so. The idea that Congress which has worked for 47 years without interruption should suffer no interference and hold its session this year too is sound. But it will not yield considerable fruit. A few persons will be arrested and it will be a good thing if Malaviyaji is one of them."

Letters from Kheda district show that the villages are giving a good account of themselves this year too, and are suffering accordingly. Bardoli always needs some support, but Borsad has shown that it can fight single-handed.

APRIL 7, 1932

It is two months since Bapu gave up milk. He says his health is good but he has a sense of fatigue. Almonds in place of milk appear to have agreed with his constitution. I roasted three pounds of almonds in the jail bakery, but the shells could not be removed. Bapu says they roasted groundnuts in an oven in South Africa with better results. Crushing the roasted almonds took some more time, and the paste was not soft as butter, but the roasting was perfect. In *Ashram Observances in Action* Bapu wrote that he learnt from the West how to experiment with his diet. Vallabhbhai said, "How long will these experiments continue? Will they go on till death?" Bapu replied, "Oh yes."

We received a letter from the sisters in the camp jail. The correspondents are Gangabehn Vaidya, Tara Modi, Taradevi Nayyar, Jyotsna Shukla, Amina Kureshi,

Chanchalbehn, Vasumati and three sisters from Maharashtra. All the letters are full of affection. Manorama, a woman from Karnatak, writes : " Some of us have never seen you face to face, but their faith is boundless. One never can tell that even after release they will be able to see you some time as they hail from out-of-the-way villages. It would be fine if you came here and met us." Another sister writes : " We are lucky that we are able to correspond with you in jail. We never enjoyed this privilege before." Taradevi, Pyarelal's aged mother, writes that she is happy and would like to have Tulsidas's Ramayan to read. Amina writes she is careful of nothing for God would look after her children. To read these letters was a great tonic for the spirit. I have no doubt that these women will take the reins of the country's administration into their hands in the future. And the children who will learn lessons of courage from such mothers will be a great asset for the motherland.

Received from Syria a fine woollen carpet with red, blue and golden stripes and patterns in black. Here is the letter sent with it :

British Consulate,
Aleppo (Syria),
Sunday, Jan. 17, after Evening Service

Dear Mr Gandhi,

The day has come, when being in prison, I feel that you will be free to accept one of our Armenian National Coloured ' Killims ', spun and woven by the refugees. I am come to live and work amongst them in view of my country's debt towards these war victims who have passed through such horrors of death, and also because I find that they are the ' child ' nation " set in the midst of those at strife." The colours are red — sacrifice ; sky-blue — hope ; gold — light.

Yours with deepest gratitude for the message you are bringing to our world,

Moto Edith Roberts

We also had a letter from Nanabhai Bhatt who informed us that a tuberculous child of Gijubhai was being

taken to Panchgani for change of air. Bapu wrote * to him, "The fear of tuberculosis is worse than the disease itself. The patient is always brooding over his ailment and imagining the pain it causes in all parts of the body. If he can be induced to throw off this obsession, he recovers at once."

An overseer asked Bapu if he had reached the divine city and seen God. Bapu replied to him, "I am unable to say that I have reached my destination. I fear I have much distance to cover."

Vallabhbhai read an article on rice in some Gujarati magazine and said to Bapu, "You would like us to give up rice, but if you read this, you will find how nutritious rice is." Bapu laughed, and as I read each point made in favour of rice, refuted it. To the argument that the protein of rice is superior to all other proteins, Bapu replied, "But it contains precious little of it. And as it contains very little protein, it is precious of course!" Another argument was that the Japanese were rice-eaters and yet in no way inferior to the meat-eating English or Americans. Bapu said, "No Japanese lives on rice only. Indeed rice with him takes second place, as he consumes fish and meat in considerable quantities just as Bengalis and Keralites take fish along with rice. They cannot be called rice-eaters. The Bihari is a rice-eater indeed. But what a poor specimen of humanity he is! You cannot build a sound body on rice alone."

The Armenian's letter refers to sky-blue whereas the colour on the carpet is like that of ashes. Bapu said, "Why does she call it sky-blue?" Later on he said, "The colour is like that of some part of the sky we see before us. Perhaps the sky over Syria is of the same colour. I remember to have read in Farrar's life of Jesus that the sky in Palestine is similar in colour on account of the hills near Nazareth."

While I was spinning, Bapu read to me a letter of Narsinhbhai Patel in which he described how he hated the

* For the main portion of the letter see *Selected Letters*, First Series, XLV. *Ed.*

British Government in India even when he had left India for Africa and how by exchanging novels with English travellers he happened to read Tolstoy's *A Murderer's Remorse*, liked it immensely and became a believer in non-violence. Bapu said his frankness was a virtue to be treasured.

APRIL 8, 1932

A letter came from Jolia Khadki in Nadiad. Bapu asked what Jolia was, and we talked about the name of *pols* (lanes). Vallabhbhai said, "*Nagarvado* (the ward occupied by Nagar Brahmans) is used in the sense of *dhedhvado* (untouchables' ward)." Bapu laughed and said that reminded him of the *nagarvado* in Rajkot which was first visited by the plague in 1896-97. Bapu had then come fresh from South Africa, and being an enthusiast for sanitation, helped in carrying out measures calculated to control the epidemic. The chief part of the programme was to demolish old-fashioned latrines and to build in their place conveniences in which the sun could penetrate and which could be cleaned by a scavenger in the front as well. Poor people readily accepted suggestions for such improvement, but the stoutest resistance to reform was offered by the Nagar Brahmans who treated the reformers with scorn. Bapu had the assistance of Meghjibhai the Superintendent of Police and others. But Nagars would not listen to them and even poured abuse on them. Bapu visited the *dhedhvado* also, but it offered a complete contrast to the *nagarvado* and was a model of cleanliness. People could sit in front of Dhedhs' houses without a carpet while the *Nagarvado* was full of dirt.

A famine had occurred at the same time, and some money was received from South Africa for famine relief. Bapu had no previous experience of this kind of work. He began to distribute grain at a centrally situated place, but there was such a rush of the crowd that something like a riot broke out.

Then again there was a dispute between the Hindus

and Musalmans of Rajkot. Bapu succeeded in resolving it, as he had two acquaintances among the Musalmans.

The Diamond Jubilee of Queen Victoria was also celebrated during that period, and Bapu participated in it fully. He taught Maganlal and Chhaganlal how to sing 'God save the King,' and induced them to perform several small tasks. He almost adopted them and felt that they would be useful members of society in the future.

Bapu wrote and dictated * many letters today. He wrote to Premabehn and Mirabehn at length with the left hand, as there is considerable pain in the fingers of the right hand.

While we were taking the evening walk, I asked Bapu how to reconcile Bapu's doctrine that Truth is God with the precept that we should do everything with a faith in God, being wholly dependent upon and inspired by Him. The following occurs in the portion of *Ashram Observances in Action* dictated by Bapu today: "A man of faith will conduct such movements as are suggested to him by God with what money God sends down to him. God does not let us see or know that He Himself does anything. He inspires men and carries out His designs through them." Was it possible to replace God with Truth wherever God occurred in this passage? How could we say that Truth does something, inspires men, suggests or conducts movements? Bapu replied, "We could certainly say that. Truth here must be taken not in a narrow but a wide sense, i.e. that which is, is eternal. Faith in God means a realization that It rules everything. *Ishvara* (the Lord) is a current word, which we have therefore accepted, otherwise that word derived from the root *ish* to rule is inferior in my opinion to *satya* (Truth). The eternal Truth certainly can be said to conduct all movements and to inspire men. Munshi asked me what Ishvara means in ईश्वरप्रणिधानात् वा. I said it meant Truth. Some commentators hold that these words are superfluous and put down by Patanjali only in order not to come into conflict with current dogma. I do not agree. I do not think an author

* For these see *Selected Letters*, First Series, XLVI, XLVII. *Ed.*

like Patanjali would use a single unnecessary word. I cannot say if he had my meaning of God in mind. But taking God in that sense, we find that these two words are indispensable."

Received a letter from Mirabehn with 24 pages, every line of it instinct with spotless devotion. She would not be happy unless she lived with and rendered personal service to Bapu. But Bapu wants her to get rid of this desire, as otherwise she would feel herself stranded when Bapu was no more with us. This controversy has been on ever since Mirabehn came to India. In today's letter she has poured out her wonderfully transparent heart :

" Bapu, I am never without that thought in my mind, as to how best to serve you. I think and pray and reason with myself, and it always ends the same way in my heart of hearts. When you are taken from us, as in jail, an instinct impels me to work with all my strength at outward service of your cause. I feel no doubt and no difficulty. When you are with us, an equally strong instinct impels me to retire into silent personal service ; trying to do anything else, I feel lost and futile. The capacity for the former depends on the fulfilment of the latter. The one is the counterpart of the other, and something continually tells me that it was for fulfilment in that way that I was led to you. The instinct is so strong that I cannot get round it or through it or over it. It is difficult to ask you to have faith in it as the full proof of its correctness can only come after your death. But there it is, Bapu, and I can only leave it at that. This much I know full well that during this struggle my strength, capacity and inner peace and happiness are much greater than last time, because I had been able to serve according to my instinct (except for one short spell of anguish since your previous release). The fact that I was on the point of a breakdown when I came here, had nothing to do with this question. It was sheer over-work, because when I saw that I was shortly going to be arrested, I simply spent my strength recklessly, knowing an enforced rest was coming. And there was more than enough work around me to be reckless over.

"Who knows if it is all delusion! But a woman has to go by instinct. It is stronger with her than any amount of reason, and her full strength can only be harnessed and brought into service if her nature is able to express itself. I have no thought, no care, no longing in all the world except for you — *you the cause* — *you the ideal.* To serve that cause in this life and to reach that ideal in after life, God who has brought me from utter darkness to the light of your path will surely not answer my prayers by leaving me now to follow a wrong instinct? I have not written all this for the sake of argument, but simply to share with you the result of my ceaseless strivings to *understand* since I have been in jail."

To this Bapu replied as follows:

"I understand and appreciate all you say about yourself. Let me put you at rest. When I come out you shall certainly be with me and resume your original work of personal service. I quite clearly see that it is the only way for your self-expression. I shall no longer be guilty as I have been before of thwarting you in any way whatsoever. My only consolation in thinking over the past is that in all I did, I was guided by nothing else than the deepest love for you and regard for your well-being. I see once more that good government is no substitute for self-government. A Gujarati proverb says: what one sees for oneself may not be visible to the nearest friend though he may have ever so powerful a searchlight. Both these proverbs may not be universally applicable. They certainly are in your case. You need therefore fear no interference from me henceforth. And who can give me more loving service than you?"

The last sentence is an acknowledgment of Bapu's defeat at the hands of love. It is literally true that none could give Bapu more loving service. Shankarlal's service when he was with Bapu was without parallel. Krishnadas' accurate service flowed from the purity of his love for Bapu. But there is a peculiar sweetness in Mirabehn's service due to her self-effacement and whole-hearted devotion. And in this respect neither Shankarlal nor

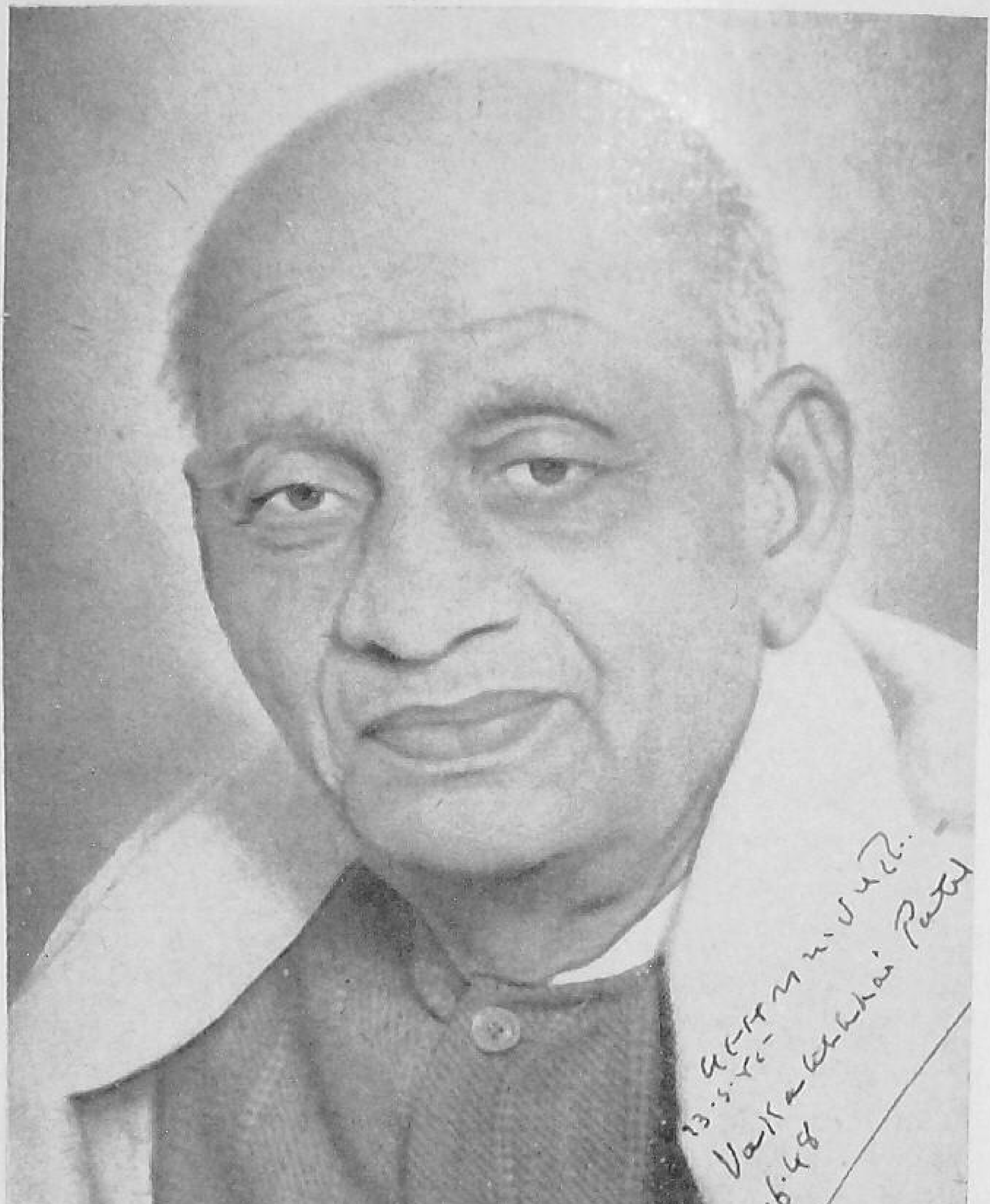
Krishnadas can approach her. I am of course inferior to all the three for obvious reasons. I have neither the devotion nor the purity of mind and body requisite for the purpose. I forget little commissions while Mirabehn would invent new types of service and compel Bapu to receive it. Bapu asked me today to slip up the pillow cases. I said I would do it soon. But meanwhile I was entrusted with some other work and forgot all about the pillows which were attended to by Vallabhbhai. I pull on in the faith that as God has placed me in Bapu's company, He will in His good time endow me with the necessary capacity for service.

April 9, 1932

In the morning we were talking about the list of things to be ordered from the bazar. Bapu wanted to curtail it, when Vallabhbhai quoted a Gujarati proverb, 'The Mian (the gentleman) steals handfuls and Allah (God) adjusts the account by taking from him camel-loads.'

We derived much fun from Hiralal Shah's letter today. Bapu is studying the heavens; he therefore asked Hiralal if there were any books or telescopes which would be useful to him. This scholar sent him excellent books and maps on astronomy. He also advised Bapu to read Kalidas's plays and said he could get a telescope from Shri Prabhashankar Pattani or from Prof. Jayshankar Trivedi. I laughed and said, "Bapu, this is like the anchorite in the story who kept a cat as a pet and then had to keep a cow to be able to give the cat some milk, and so on." Bapu agreed and said, "We go in for no end of trouble as soon as we desire something."

In most of the letters addressed to people outside jail Bapu is in the habit of saying that he is a prisoner and therefore the addressee should see to it that his letter is not printed. But he does not add this rider when he feels that there is no likelihood of a letter being thus given out. I found however that Dr. Muttu had published Bapu's letter in which he acknowledged receipt of the books sent to him. We have got to be careful about so many things.



Sardar Vallabhbhai Patel

In his autobiography Bapu has referred to his lack of self-confidence in early life, but has not given many illustrative incidents. When now-a-days Bapu surprises an opponent with a cogent argument couched in measured words or replies to the attacks made upon him, one feels that he perhaps had full faith from the first that he would shine as a lawyer. In Lloyd George's diary written at the age of 18 we see how ambitious and self-confident he was even then. But Bapu was not like that. As a barrister he was not sure if he would be able to get sufficient practice to maintain himself in Bombay. He therefore applied for a teacher's post with a salary of 75 rupees. The Head Master called him for interview and found him unfit for the post! This incident provides food for thought and hope to all who are diffident of their own powers. I feel that the thing that has made Bapu what he is is his constant devotion to truth. This made him fearless and paved the way for him to experiment with truth with a profound faith in God. Continuous worship of truth and perfect readiness to practise it enable a man to scale tremendous heights of spirituality. I wondered how Bapu had ever wanted to secure a job with a salary of 75 rupees. Bapu said, "I had no ambition at all. The only idea was to maintain myself somehow or other and to render some service to the public wherever I was."

Vallabhbhai, upon hearing this, told a similar funny story about himself: "My maternal uncle was an overseer in the municipality. He thought I was no good at studies, and with a view to my welfare, offered me the post of *mukaddam* so that I would begin to earn my livelihood at once."

APRIL 10, 1932

On Sundays Bapu commences his twenty-four hours' silence at 3 p.m., so that if he has to talk with jail officials, he can do so for some time on Sundays as well on Mondays. It was now a couple of minutes to three. Therefore Vallabhbhai said, "You have now a few minutes of speech. So tell us if you have any instructions to give." I remarked,

"You are talking as if Bapu has now to make his last will and testament." Bapu replied, "All right, I will tell you. Please excuse me if I have offended you in any way." Saying this he began to laugh. His laugh was occasioned by a sweet reminiscence of his. He said. "Ba said to me, 'Please excuse me if I have offended you in any way.'" Vallabhbhai did not know; so he asked, "When was that?".

"When I was arrested of course. She said this with tears in her eyes. She was afraid we might never meet again on this side of the grave and was anxious not to die unforgiven."

Thomas Hardy has drawn *Some Crusted Characters.* One such character was a Bengali cook whom I met in Nasik jail. He spoke Burmese, Tamil and English. This was his seventh conviction.

I have met a second such character in Yeravda. Soma, a Thakarda from Chalala, is a living proof of the fact that in order to be an aristocrat, one need not have lots of money, for he has hardly two acres of land. He said, "The best cotton comes from Chalala as well as the best *tuver* pulse and the best pomegranates. Dholka is famous for its pomegranates, but its fame is undeserved." After Chalala Soma sings the praises of Gujarat. He said, 'In Maharashtra there is nothing but stones. There is all the difference in the world between Gujarat and Maharashtra. Look at this Maruti. He is a convict overseer but a perfect fool. He was asked to scrape mangoes but he does not even know how to hold the scraper. And his language? *ikde tikde*! I taught him how to cook but he would not admit it. Whoever puts sugar in *kadhi* (buttermilk boiled with gram flour and condiments)? The proper thing to put in is *gud*. Then if the *dal* is insufficiently cooked, he will not admit that he had put in too little soda. He will say, 'Vallabhbapa gave me too little soda!'" Soma was given some cotton to clean; he then exclaimed, "What a kind of cotton is this? How can it be carded? It is damaged by frost. The best cotton for carding should be collected from pods as soon

as they burst, and then we can make fine cloth with it. I have woven 60 yards of cloth as my daily task." Soma asked if we had grown any pomegranates in the Ashram. I said yes but they did not taste well. Soma observed, "Evidently you do not plough the garden as you ought to. How much water do you give to each plant? It should be soaked in two or three feet of water." Soma admits his guilt, repents of it and says, "I wish to keep away from jail for the rest of my life. God has given me hands and feet; I will therefore earn my bread in the sweat of my brow. A *patidar* (landlord) had promised to give me eighteen bighas of land as a tenant, but I was arrested before I could get it. It is all the working of fate. I owe nobody anything; on the other hand others owe me a hundred or two. We are Baraiyas. I am now in Chalala but originally hail from Charotar."

APRIL 11, 1932

Today is Bapu's day of silence. Vallabhbhai said to him, "We have been here now for fourteen weeks. How much longer do you propose to stay here? If you had not gone to England, the months you wasted in that country would have counted as part of the term of imprisonment." Bapu's only reply was a smile.

Talking of Australia and America Bapu said, "America was founded by men who had left the motherland for the sake of liberty of worship; on the other hand Australia started as a convict settlement. But why single out Australia? What sort of people were those Englishmen who are adored as the defenders and servants of the nation? Drake was a pirate pure and simple. What was Clive? And Hastings? And Cecil Rhodes? Rhodes was a great speculator, cheat and mischiefmaker. He colonized Rhodesia, the history of which is just like that of India in the days of the East India Company. All the same we must concede that England has thrown up good men also."

Some one from the Ashram wrote, asking Bapu if wet-sheet packs could be given in every kind of fever. Bapu replied, "Certainly. We must only make sure that there

is not a single drop of water left in the sheet." I said, "In Europe influenza patients are now made to lie down on snow as a part of the treatment." Bapu replied, "The rationale of that treatment is obvious. A man lying on snow does not feel cold but heat. Ice if crushed and kept at the temperature of ice would also serve the same purpose as snow. Water at varying temperatures and in different forms applied to the skin sets in operation a series of reactions within the body." At the Ashram Bapu gave wet-sheet packs in cases of severe burns as well as small-pox.

Manu wrote informing Bapu how her maternal aunt Balibehn had slapped her never-do-well father (Harilal). Bapu replied that she had done the right thing; there was no *himsa* (violence) but pure love in her act.

APRIL 12, 1932

In yesterday's instalment of *Ashram Observances in Action* Bapu dealt with truth at some length. An incident occurred this morning which shows how habituated we are to do violence to truth consciously or unconsciously. A Scottish prisoner who is our neighbour inscribed the words 'Inspector-General' on an attache-case. The jailer asked him to remove the hyphen betwen Inspector and General. Before doing so however the prisoner asked me if the jailer was right. I laughed and said, "The jailer is supposed to have a better knowledge of English than you." Bapu said, "Please remove the hyphen, as the jailer is right." Then addressing me he said, "Your answer to the prisoner's question was full of breaches of the observances of truth. He, poor fellow, could not at all make out what you meant. If you wanted to say that the jailer knew less of English than the prisoner but the prisoner must carry out his instructions as he had more experience, you in fact said just the opposite of it. If you meant that he should not obey the jailer, you should have said so explicitly. Or perhaps you deliberately used ambiguous words."

I listened to this just criticism in silence.

Bapu wanted to dictate one letter today, but as I was spinning at the time, he would not disturb me. Therefore the Sardar wrote it at his dictation. In the evening Bapu entrusted him with a still more difficult task. Bapu had written a long letter to the Ashram on the study of the heavens of which two copies must be prepared for the women prisoners and the prisoners in the extension. I had prepared one copy yesterday, and a second copy was to be made today, but as I was otherwise engaged, Bapu was rather in difficulty. I said I would prepare the second copy before I went to bed. But Bapu observed, "What if Vallabhbhai does it? Let him." The Sardar set to work and took about an hour over it. I asked Bapu, "Why did you entrust this work to one who would not bother to write even a single letter?" Bapu replied, "He will leave it if he is tired."

This was a really new experience for the Sardar who had to copy unfamiliar and jaw-breaking words. But he persevered and finished the task before going to bed.

Vallabhbhai's goodness is in evidence at all times. With what devotion he cuts fruit and crushes the tooth-stick for Bapu! I have much to learn from him.

Hiralal Shah wrote to Bapu that he had found the master-key of interpretation in certain subjects. To him Bapu wrote a reply with the left hand as follows:

"Thanks for the books and the affectionate letter, which will come in useful. But I am not so ambitious as you think. I only wish to acquire such general knowledge as will enable me to have a better view of God in the heavens. Please send me a small book on astronomy. I will take good care of your books. I have noticed how carefully you use them. I do not all at once borrow such books from friends for fear they may be lost or damaged.

"Your industry and accuracy are beyond praise. But may it not be that your claim to have found the master-key is such as cannot be sustained? What is that key? What makes you think it is a key and the master-key at that? Is your claim accepted by the experts? What fruits may we hope to reap from your discovery? May it not be

tainted with the same blemish as that spinning wheel without a spring? I am willing to understand things from you and will weigh your arguments dispassionately. But I would ask you to cultivate that humility which is the hall-mark of a seeker. I know it cannot be cultivated of set purpose, but it is latent in all real discoveries. In spite of a thousand things which support his thesis, the seeker has doubts about the results of his quest. Consequently when he places them before the world, he has made assurance doubly sure, so that the world believes in him in amazement. His words have power and lustre. I would have nothing to say if this were true of your discovery and entitled you to our congratulations. I wish it were."

APRIL 13, 1932

Bapu has pain in the bone above the left elbow as well as in the right thumb; still he appears to have resolved to spin 375 rounds daily during the last three days. Doctor Mehta asks him to give both his hands a rest, but Bapu says spinning does not aggravate the pain at all. He spins more than usual as it is the National Week. He was tired out today. Generally he has done with spinning at 3, but today he went on till 4 p.m. as it is the last day of the week and he would not be happy if he spun less than 500 yards.

There is generally an effort to put in greater work during the National Week than usual. I for one however would be thankful to God if I could discharge my daily round of duties all the year round. If we do not pass a single day or a single hour in idleness, we need not observe any holy days.

Bapu had refused to believe that the hurt caused to Saruprani Nehru had been caused by the police, and made two or three guesses on the point. But Saruprani herself has declared today that the hurt was inflicted by the police. Bapu's blood boiled when he knew this. He said, "Lalaji was unintentionally beaten by the police; yet how deeply was the country agitated upon hearing the news! Now it is the turn of Jawaharlal's mother, and the attack seems

to have been deliberate. Still there seems no righteous indignation being felt in the country. Has not the *Leader* commented on the incident ?" Vallabhbhai replied, "The agitators are all behind prison bars. The *Leader* has written about it but without any spirit." Bapu had it read to him and was dissatisfied with it. He said, "The editor of the *Leader* has had the title of 'level-headed' conferred on him! Only this morning we found some journalist describing the *Hindu* and the *Leader* as sober newspapers."

Bapu wrote to Martin about interviews with non-political associates.

Talking about Islam Bapu said, "The Hanafi School shore Islam of its tolerance. Having destroyed all copies of the Kuran except one, they are proud that it is the only book in the world in which there are no various readings! But the generosity of Umar may be equalled here and there but not surpassed. The intolerance of Islam notwithstanding, there has not been so much bloodshed in its name as in the name of Christianity."

APRIL 14, 1932

Bapu seems to have resolved to spin 500 yards every day and had difficulty in doing so. The interviews took considerable time. The interviewers were Mohanlal Bhatt, Dhurandhar and Manibhai Desai from the extension and Babibehn, Manu and Kusum Desai from Rajkot. But the longest period passed in talking with—. The Superintendent informed Bapu that — had been on hunger strike for the last six days, and asked him if he would try to persuade — to give it up. Bapu agreed. — came with a *langoti* (loincloth) on. He said he was under a vow of self-sufficiency in cloth, so that he wore only clothes spun by himself, and secondly he had vowed to live on food obtained by *madhukari* (begging from a number of houses) and if that was not available, on milk and fruit. The Superintendent remarked — was not under these vows when he was a prisoner in Nasik. — explained that he had taken them after the truce. Bapu said, "Self-sufficiency in cloth does not mean any such thing as you imagine.

It would be different if you had to pay for your clothes. But here in jail it is your duty to put on such clothes as the jail authorities issue. And then how can you insist upon having a particular diet? The vow to live on *madhukari* or else on fruit is quite meaningless. Are not milk and fruit food? I look upon them as luxuries. Every one else going to jail could say the same thing and thus avoid C class food. Your hunger strike does not appeal to me at all." — advanced another argument: "There are observances in Hinduism, but we have not cultivated the art of dying rather than breaking them, with the result that Hinduism has suffered an eclipse. You see they have clean shaved my head, but no one dare touch a hair of a Muslim's beard." Bapu replied, "That analogy applies to your *shikha* (top-knot) only. For the rest the stand you have taken up does no credit to Hinduism or to a worker like yourself. The authorities would not let you die; it is possible that after making you fast for a few days more they will give you milk and fruit. But I do not think it would be a victory of Satyagraha, as they would be acting thus only to avoid botheration. One who is under such vows as yours has no business to court jail." Still — would not give in. Bapu said, "My dear man, it is I who am the author of this movement; therefore you must defer to my views." — was still adamant. Bapu said, "You say you do not mind if you die. But to say so and to die like that is a sort of indulgence, and there is pride in adhering to a so-called vow." Still — would not listen. Therefore Bapu said, "All right, I would not force my views on you. But I do ask you to give up the hunger strike if my argument has made any impression on you." Turning to the Superintendent he said, "Please give him milk on medical grounds. Something must be given to a fasting man if he is not to be allowed to die; so give him milk or glucose." The Superintendent said, "No, that would be going against principle." Bapu said, "I cannot press my request, as I do not think he is right, and there is something in what you say. But the striker is a man of the type of —. On that ground you can give him milk if you like."

In a letter written from outside jail some one asked Bapu to express his opinion on the nature of the people's movement. Bapu wondered how anybody could write him such a letter and said no reply at all should be sent to him.

The Superintendent suggested that if some of the Civil Disobedience prisoners were prepared to become convict warders, he would remove the ordinary convict warders from their midst. Bapu liked the idea but was told that the political prisoners were unwilling to accept the job. "Other prisoners would not obey us, and there would only be dissensions among ourselves. Some of them are out to cause trouble and if we reported against them, we would incur their displeasure for nothing." Bapu said, "That will have to be done even under Swaraj. We shall have to maintain order among our own people. I would love to be a convict warder myself."

Received permission to send copies of Bapu's writing on the study of the heavens to the women prisoners and to the prisoners in the extension. The jailer read it too and observed the constellation *Mriga* (Orion) with deep interest. He asked Bapu if he was going to write about other stars as well.

Soma told me today the origin of the Vethia(one compelled to labour for others without payment of wages)'s hedge. The *patel* (village headman) got a hedge repaired by a *vethia*. He asked the latter if he had done the task properly. The *vethia* said, "If there is no gust of wind, the hedge will stand, but a strong wind will bring it down." The *patel* remarked, "What a fine hedge you have made!"

APRIL 15, 1932

Bapu dictated a letter to — this morning. I had somewhat misunderstood him. — says he is ready to treat the jail food as *madhukari* but as he is ashamed of begging, he has given up ordinary food. And as he would be ashamed of begging after release, he should have milk and fruit in jail as well! This subtlety was beyond me. What horrid shapes Satyagraha is capable of assuming! Here is Bapu's letter to —:

"We three discussed your case and came to the conclusion that what you think is religion (*dharma*) is irreligion pure and simple. A Satyagrahi cannot take any vow without the President's consent as regards anything which is likely to be related to the Satyagraha movement. Your interpretation of your vow is wrong. *Madhukari* has no meaning in jail. You have no right to decide just now whether or not you would feel shame in going about for *madhukari* after you are released. To determine now what the state of your mind will be later on is to arrogate to yourself the function of God Almighty. We believe that it is your duty to take C class food as a gift of Providence. The duty of a *sannayasi* (monk) points in the same direction.

"As regards clothes it is improper to insist on wearing khadi in jail. It is the duty of a Satyagrahi prisoner not to insist on khadi in jail so long Congress has not taken any decision on the point. And this is by no means derogatory to your vow of self-sufficiency. I therefore request you to give up the hunger strike, admit your error, and begin to take food. For a day or two you should take only milk and fruit on medical grounds. I hope you will act agreeably to our considered view."

This was sent with a covering letter to Major Bhandari:

"Dear Mr Bhandari,

I would like the accompanying letter to be delivered to — at once, if you approve of the contents. They are nothing but re-exhortation to break his fast and take ordinary diet.

Yours sincerely,
M. K. GANDHI"

When the Superintendent came Bapu said to him, "If — does not accept the advice given in this letter, you will have to let Mahadev go and reason with him." At half past three Kateli came and took me to —. I had to talk to him for about two hours. He said, "My position is independent of Bapu. A *sannyasi* should be free to live

his own life everywhere and in jail too if Government choose to place him under arrest." His position was that he took the *madhukari* vow in order to give up sweets and he had to live on fruit as he had not the courage to go begging for food. I said, "You therefore accepted a compromise. Here too you must do the same and take what food we give you as *madhukari*. If you persist in your present attitude you will hold up Satyagraha as a laughing stock as well as cause pain to Bapu by your obstinacy. In any case you should accept the advice of an experienced and unselfish Satyagrahi like Bapu." — came round after all. I gave him lemon and honey with water. He put on prisoner's clothes. Bapu said, "Thank God our prestige has after all remained unimpaired."

We did not get any prize in the Trade Symbol competition of the *Bombay Chronicle*. Vallabhbhai laughed and said, "We have been unlucky and made fools of ourselves." Bapu said, "It is not a matter of intelligence alone. Chance also plays a big part, and we cannot give one moment of our time or one pie of our money to games of chance."

Talking of — led us to a mention of the Maharashtrian co-workers, among whom, as Bapu said, Dev and Dastane are of the front rank. As for Vinoba and Kaka Kalelkar we have long forgotten that they are Maharashtrians. As regards Kaka Bapu said, ' I came into close contact with Kaka during the last term of imprisonment as never before. Kaka is innocent of the Maharashtra spirit. Outside jail I could never have realized Kaka's infinite tenderness. Could you imagine Kaka weeping ? Yet I have seen him burst into tears. We had frequent discussions, and Kaka would tell me, "If you find me erring, you should mercilessly correct my errors." I replied I would make full use of the confidence he reposed in me. Accordingly I would often criticize him strongly and Kaka would admit his error and cry like a child. Kaka has mastered the principles of Satyagraha. But a defect in his character comes in the way of his exerting a salutary influence over others in full. When he came here, he had

little self-confidence in certain things. He was under the wrong impression that he could not do something or other, that he would soon be out of breath if he did this or that. When he came to jail he weighed 96 pounds only and felt very weak. But I added at least 20 pounds to his weight, and then he was able to work, take long walks and digest an adequate amount of food. I think his co-workers had disabled him by taking work off his hands, but here he overcame his debility.' Referring to Doyle's partiality for Kaka Bapu once said, "That Doyle should think much of him is not a matter for surprise. He had seen Kaka offering Satyagraha in sympathy with Muslims. And he must have heard Kaka expounding the doctrine of Satyagraha and discussed it with him."

Bapu referred to his company with Kaka as *satsanga* (good company), and I feel that Bapu would be only too glad to have him as a companion. This *satsanga* Bapu cannot get from me, nor I am afraid from the Sardar.

APRIL 16, 1932

Maruti the convict warder who has been placed by the jail authorities to help Bapu is always being run down by Soma the cook as a clumsy person who can do nothing right. But the talk I had with Maruti today was an eye-opener, and I was sorry that I had thus far been unable to appreciate his tenderness. Owing to the influx of political prisoners, Government have had to release hundreds of old offenders. Maruti would often ask me why they are being released. I would tell him that Government do not mind letting hardened criminals loose on society but they must place political workers under lock and key.

It was Maruti's turn now and he informed me that he was going to be released tomorrow. I asked him if he would forget us when he was free. "Oh no," he replied. "I must have performed many meritorious deeds in my previous lives which entitled me to have come into contact with Gandhiji in jail. How can I ever forget this pleasure and privilege? This good fortune would never have come to me if I had not been to jail. I am a poor peasant, and

Gandhiji needs nothing that I could offer him. Still I wish to send him some present. Could you please suggest what to send ? " I replied it was enough and more than enough that he had served Bapu in jail with all his heart and he need not send any present from outside. Maruti said, " I do not agree with you. What I have done for Bapu was done at the bidding of the jail authorities and I cannot claim any credit for it. It would be creditable indeed if I were free and served Bapu in freedom. I am quite unfit to attend upon him who is revered by hundreds of millions, and whose coming to jail has opened the jail gates for us. How much have he and his co-workers suffered ? Pyarelal for instance fasted for eleven days, and was abused and tortured for this jail offence. What service can we poor fellows render to such a great man as Bapu is ? I wonder if I shall ever have a look at his face again." So saying he heaved a deep sigh and repeated his question as to what would be a suitable present. I was at a loss what to say but Bapu and the Sardar who had been to the jail gate to meet visitors came in at this moment, and thus our talk came to an end.

Who could emulate Bapu's yearning for service or even understand it ? His hand gives him pain. The doctors forbid him to spin, but still he spun as many as 405 rounds today, and said spinning had nothing to do with the pain. " Don't you see what progress I am making ? " he exclaimed. Then again he wants to brush up his Urdu and to cultivate the art of quick reading. Raihana Tyebji writes letters to him in Urdu. Bapu sends a reply in Urdu and gets it corrected by her. He calls her his teacher and refers to himself as her pupil. As if this was not enough, he has taken out all the Urdu books from the jail library and reads them while he is at his meals. The study of the heavens is deeply interesting to him as a stepstone to the knowledge of God. He is therefore collecting books on the subject and writing to a number of correspondents about it. And while reading Ruskin's books he is so much absorbed in them that he feels he should write out all the thoughts suggested by his reading.

He sent me to see ailing — with the Superintendent's permission and wrote at once to the jailer as regards his treatment.

APRIL 17, 1932

Bapu today thought out an original method of following the doctor's advice that he should give rest to the left elbow which is causing pain. He fixed the spindle on the Bardoli type of spinning-wheel in such a way as to turn the wheel with the left hand. I do not know if this helps the left hand at all, for instead of drawing the thread it has to turn the wheel. But Bapu began this experiment. He had difficulty in drawing the thread for some time. In Nasik jail I had made the same experiment as my right hand was painful, but in vain. Bapu however persevered for an hour and a half and spun 7 slivers. With the seventh sliver he was able to draw the thread in a normal manner. He was therefore highly delighted and said, "You see I have spun 95 rounds now. 95 plus 282 being yesterday's surplus equals more than 375 which is my daily quota." I replied, "Yes, Bapu, but you cannot say that you are resting the left hand." Bapu said, "The hand will feel rested after it gets accustomed to this exercise. And it does not matter even if it gets no rest after all, for if the right hand at some time or other fails altogether, the left hand will be ready to take its place."

Major Mehta gave Bapu electric massage for the right thumb and the left elbow.

Major Martin went on leave and therefore sent empty bottles in his house to the jail hospital. Bapu observed: "How thoughtful he is about the prisoners in his charge! Britishers are straightforward and conscientious in the discharge of their duties so long as their self-interest is not in question."

Henry George has a graphic description of poverty. He says it is "the open-mouthed, relentless hell which yawns beneath civilized society."

APRIL 18, 1932

Bapu set right the bearings of his wheel and continued to move the wheel with the left hand. The results today were better than yesterday. Yesterday it took him three hours and a half to spin 95 rounds while today he spun 85 rounds in two hours and a half. "This is no good," said the Sardar. "You cannot acquire new skills after a certain age. You had better revert to the previous practice." Bapu replied, "I certainly did better today than yesterday." The Sardar observed that if the Ashramites heard about it, they would all begin to spin with the left hand. Bapu said he was going to write to them about it in his next letter. The Sardar suggested that children should be taught to move the wheel with either hand. Bapu agreed and added that in Japan they taught the children to be ambi-dexterous.

Bapu wrote to the Ashram secretary about his experiment and recommended that those in the Ashram who could should use either hand in the various tasks of the day.

A sixty-one year old man in Assam has sent a piece of cloth spun as well as woven by himself for Bapu's use. There must be many such unknown devotees in the country.*

APRIL 19, 1932

Sent Lakshmidasbhai Bapu's model of a spinning-wheel. He said further improvement of the wheel was possible. Lakshmidasbhai favours the use of coir string in order to reduce the friction between the wheel and the spindle while Bapu goes in for cotton. He could not stand noise made by the new spinning-wheel with coir string and said, "I feel as an artist would feel if he found a discordant note struck with his musical instrument."

Bapu had an improved *modhiyun* (spindle-holder) made by the jail carpenter according to his instructions, and it gave good results even with the left hand. We often

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* For a long letter written today, see the last letter in *Selected Letters*, First Series (Navajivan). *Ed.*

feel that Bapu is a born mechanic, as well as a born physician.

Sulphur confection received for the Sardar was at once analysed by Bapu. The Sardar wondered how he had been able to do it. Bapu said he had been a compounder for one year.

Surendra wrote to Bapu on the subject of brahmacharya(chastity) and Bapu replied to him as follows :

" You should not hesitate to write to me whatever you think of me. Such hesitation amounts to a fault. I learn much from the criticism of coworkers, because it is free from enmity. To tell a friend what we think of him as soon as the thought enters our mind is the acid test of friendship and love. Love is not love if it does not speak out.

'Brahmacharya is such only if it persists under all conditions and in the face of every possible temptation. If a beautiful woman approaches the marble statue of a man, it will not be affected in the least. A brahmachari is one who reacts in a similar case in the same way as marble does. But just as the marble statue refrains from using its eyes or ears, even so a man should avoid every occasion of sin.

" You argue that the sight and the company of women have been found to be inimical to self-restraint and are therefore to be avoided. This argument is fallacious. Brahmacharya hardly deserves the name if it can be observed only by avoiding the company of women even when such company is kept with a view to serve. It amounts to physical renunciation unbacked by the essential mental detachment, and lets us down in critical times. The Gita is right in saying (II : 59) that one's yearning for the pleasures of the world withers away only when he has had the beatific vision. But the converse of this statement is equally true : one must not hope for realization so long as he yearns after the fleshpots of Egypt. That is to say, the two things go hand in hand. The yearning departs when one beholds the supreme. Although the objects of sense have disappeared, the yearning for them has not been

thoroughly uprooted. Therefore there is a possibility of desire raising its head so long as one has not seen God. After a man has seen Him desire becomes an impossibility ; indeed he ceases to be masculine and becomes sexless. He is no longer a significant figure but is reduced to zero. In other words his personality melts away in that of God. The idea becomes clearer if in place of the words *param*, God, *brahma*, we use the word *satya* or truth. There is no room here for self-deception. If there is any one in the Ashram who talks of taking the whole world for his family but harbours evil thoughts in his mind, he is a *mithyachari* (hypocrite) in the language of the Gita (III : 6) while we are all along thinking of a *satyachari* (truthful person) and how he should behave. Therefore if 99 out of 100 in the Ashram are hypocrites but if only one of them observes mental as well as physical restraint, the Ashram will have justified its existence, and the Ashram discipline will turn out to be the right discipline. Let us not worry about what others are doing, but only about what we can do. On seeing another's palace, we must not pull down our own humble cottage. That is to say, if we find another man moving freely among women with an innocent mind and if we feel that we are incapable of such detachment, we must bear our own limitations in mind and refrain from imitating him. The Ashram is making a new and therefore risky experiment, and only those should join it who can be truthful. Those who cannot be so must keep away from it. It is not expected that every man in the Ashram may associate with the women at all times. He is only left free for such association. This freedom may be enjoyed by those who can do so without swerving from the strait and narrow path, but he who is not sure of himself must never avail himself of it. If A looks upon X as a daughter and treats her accordingly, B must not imitate him if he has not the same feeling for X.

" You must not cease to exercise the reasoning faculty. Reason may go wrong at times. But that does not matter. We have a right to commit mistakes. When we find them out, we shall correct them and march forward.

"There is no doubt that one who keeps the Ashram observances can render more substantial service to women."

As regards giving writing materials to C class political prisoners Bapu said, "I would give them to every one of them, and see if any one misuses the privilege. I would not think of deciding beforehand which of them are likely to make a good use of it. Mahadev and Devdas visited British prisoners and found that prisoners in England enjoyed amenities which were not available to prisoners here. We are apt to forget that criminals are as good fellows as ourselves. Quin used to tell me that the only difference is that they have been arrested while we have avoided arrest. The difference between a murderer and ourselves is that the murderer has done the deed while we have often thought of doing it but have not done it from fear or some other emotion."

The Superintendent did not appreciate this standpoint and replied, "Quin never told this to me. He told you so perhaps in a sentimental mood."

April 20, 1932

Got the aching tooth extracted. What a pity I am losing my teeth at the age of 40! I remember father had tooth-ache at the same age. The tooth was extracted by Major Mehta himself. Bapu likes him very much for his dignified courtesy and praised him in two of his letters.

This evening Bapu returned from his walk * and I was wiping the dust off his feet when he said: "The image of Jesus Christ which I saw in the Vatican at Rome is before my eyes at all times. The body was covered only by a small piece of cloth such as is worn by poor men in our villages. And what a wonderful look of compassion he had!"

There is a new defence of General Dyer in a letter written by Edward Thompson to the *Spectator.*

* In the evening Gandhiji had an hour's walk as in the morning. *Ed.*

Thompson was told by Miles Irwing that after the Jalianwalabagh massacre Dyer said: "I did not know that there was no exit from the place except where I had stationed my soldiers. And as the people did not move but remained seated, I was afraid they would attack us. The incident occurred six months ago but still I cannot forget it, so much so that I have not been able to sleep all these days. My evidence before the Hunter Committee was mere boastfulness indulged in at the instance of other people."

Thompson is at present the Indian correspondent of the *Manchester Guardian*. He has launched vicious attacks against the Congress, and the *Modern Review* has taken him to task for it. He is the author of *The other Side of the Medal* and *Farewell to India.* It was at his place in Oxford that Bapu met the university dons. The Sardar said he seemed to be a perfect rogue. "No", said Bapu. "You have not read *The Other Side of the Medal.* If you had you would not have such a bad opinion of him. He did not get any money for the book in which he has brought to light facts hitherto suppressed by English historians and suggested that India should have independence as an atonement for the sins of Britishers in India. The British were very angry with him for writing such a book. He is not dishonest but hysterical and unbalanced. He would abuse you today and shower praise on you tomorrow. Such was my impression after my talk with him."

Nanabhai Bhatt, replying to Bapu's letter, said that sometimes he felt he would accept Bapu's advice but could not summon the necessary courage for the purpose. Where was the harm if he collected funds for Dakshinamurti school? Did not Bapu do the same for Daridranarayan (God incarnated as the poor)? Bapu wrote him a second letter in which he explained how there was no inconsistency in his collecting funds himself while advising Nanabhai not to do so: "Dakshinamurti is your institution as the Ashram is mine. It is your duty to teach your pupils and not to go abegging for funds. Similarly it is my duty to

help the Ashramites to keep the observances and to promote the various activities of the Ashram, and not to go about seeking monetary help for it. And while doing my duty I must have trust in God that He would provide for my needs. But the rule has no application as regards the funds collected for Daridranarayan. In this case collection of funds is the only thing I have to do. You may not leave your post at Dakshinamurti whose finances should be attended to by friends. Don't you see the distinction? This distinction was made by me even in South Africa. For instance I ceased to collect funds for the Phoenix settlement, but I carried the beggar's bowl from door to door for other public institutions. Therefore I still suggest that you decide not to go about for funds. You write to your supporters about your decision, and let events take their own course. Our people do not appreciate the value of such institutions as yours, nor have they any idea of their duty to supply them with funds, it is said; but this is only a half-truth. We who manage such institutions are lacking in faith so that our people have not been rightly educated in charity. It is a vicious circle. We did not teach people to lend a helping hand and therefore they did not learn how to do it. And so long as people do not send funds of their own accord, we must go about from door to door in search of money. This is not the way to do things. The people do not realize their duty, and we do not acquire the requisite faith. It is all labour lost. Therefore some of us have to take great risks in an attempt to cultivate faith. And you are quite fit to take the initiative. Yours is an old and well-known institution; some of your teachers are selfless workers; and you impart education in a loving spirit. There are students who have completed your course, and donors who extend regular support. Therefore my advice is not improper even from the practical standpoint. And pure faith and practicality are identical in my opinion.

"Why do you suppose that only the children of the rich will be able to join your school if you raise school fees and become self-supporting? Even then you will

admit some children free of charge, and call upon the rich to bear so much additional burden. They will and must bear it cheerfully if they want their children to be educated by you. Why do you entertain doubt about the importance of your educational methods? I am quite certain that our finest institutions suffer from arrested development, as their teachers waste their time in collecting funds. The internal development of the institution should be the teacher's sole concern. If he neglects it and undertakes begging tours, he fails in the discharge of his real duty. He has no faith in his own vocation. The results are there for every one to see. You meet the teachers and the friends who support the school and announce your decision without seeking their advice. Faith does not wait for any one else's advice, and you will be a loser if you depend upon it.

"Do write again if you feel like it, and try to derive benefit from my knowledge and experience which, I claim, are wider than yours. And in jail I have leisure which I cannot command outside."

Talking about sleeping in the open air I reminded Bapu that he had been habituated to it even in South Africa. "Of course," said Bapu. "In South Africa we slept in the open not only when it was extremely cold but even when it was raining. In the cold weather we used any number of blankets, and during the rainy season we kept a mackintosh on the top. We had even thought out some method of covering the face. We were fanatical experimenters, determined to carry everything to its legitimate conclusion. For instance we consumed a large number of onions when we found that they were nutritious. And at one time I took a lot of tamarind with *gud*(treacle) and water as it is antiscorbutic as well as much cheaper than lemons."

APRIL 21, 1932

As we awoke for the morning prayers, Bapu said, "I do not believe the jail authorities are not issuing any milk to Kaka. They may have said they were unable to supply

cow's milk. And perhaps olive oil is given to him in place of cow's butter which cannot be had. The pity of it is that cow's milk is not available in many places such as Madras, the Punjab and perhaps Maharashtra. But one who is under a vow to take cow's milk can take Nestle's milk and butter from a foreign dairy, for all milk in foreign countries is cow's milk !" How far may a vow of this kind not lead a man ?

After prayers Bapu said, "I must write to the Inspector General of prisons this very day, although the question may be raised how I came to know about this and the Superintendent may be asked to scrutinize our post with greater care."

Bapu wrote to Doyle about Kaka and Narahari as well as visiting prisoners who do not take part in politics.

April 22, 1932

Letters from Belgam received today show that Kaka gets neither milk nor *ghi*, suffers from backache and cannot meet other prisoners. Narahari cards and spins wool. Mani has lost weight and suffered hardships but learnt the Gita by heart.

Maithilisharan Gupta has defended the sorrow of Urmila in a long letter of 18 pages, the whole of which is a poem as Bapu says. The copyist of the letter is 'Ajmeri' a Muslim disciple of the Hindi poet, and lover of Hindi literature.

April 23, 1932

Reading newspapers is a task assigned to the Sardar. As I spun in the verandah, I would ask him for news in a nutshell. He would say : "The collector of Kheda at a Muslim Conference : Samuel Hoare playing tennis," and so on.

Sarojini Naidu has been arrested. Malaviyaji is going to Delhi by car. He is working hard at the age of 70 and making the police scurry here and there.

APRIL 24, 1932

Satyagrahi prisoners in Karachi jail were flogged yesterday for shouting national slogans. The District Magistrate has issued a press note in defence of this punishment, which Bapu was deeply pained to read.

He was glad to learn today that both Malaviyaji and Sarojini have been arrested, and said to the Sardar, "Tell me now if anybody who should be in jail is out of it."

APRIL 25, 1932

Verrier Elwin wrote to say that a bishop called him a traitor to Christ and did not permit him to preach in churches. To him Bapu replied as follows:

"I wish you will not take to heart what the bishop has been saying. Your church is in your heart. Your pulpit is the whole earth. The blue sky is the roof of your church. And what is this Catholicism? It is surely of the heart. The formula has its use. But it is made by man. If I have any right to interpret the message of Jesus as revealed in the gospels, I have no manner of doubt in my mind that it is in the main denied in the churches, whether Roman or English, High or Low. Lazarus has no room in those places. This does not mean that the custodians know that the Man of Sorrows has been banished from the buildings called Houses of God. In my opinion, this excommunication is the surest sign that the truth is in you and with you. But my testimony is worth nothing, if when you are alone with your Maker, you do not hear His voice saying, 'Thou art on the right path.' That is the unfailing test and no other."

Bapu wrote 44 * letters this week. A little girl had played the part of Bharata-mata (Mother India) in school theatricals. Bapu therefore asked her to acquire the virtues of Mother India. Upon this she asked what these virtues were. Bapu replied: "Patience, endurance, forgiveness, bravery, non-violence and the like."

* For some of these see *Selected Letters*, Second Series (Navajivan), I, II, IV, V. *Ed.*

Another girl asked the meaning of the Gujarati proverb बापना राज्यमां न समाय, माना रेंटियामां समाय । (i.e. " one may not find shelter in father's kingdom, but mother's spinning-wheel can be depended upon at all times "). Why do people wear *yajnopavita* ? Why is the cow called mother ? Bapu replied, " There may be anarchy in the kingdom and therefore no place for the poor, but the spinning wheel is their never-failing friend. *Yajnopavita* (sacred thread worn by Brahmans etc.) and rosary may be helpful in self-purification, but are not of much use now-a-days. The cow is looked upon as mother, for like mother she gives milk, not only to babies but to every one of us. Mother again is the recipient of much service from children, but who cares for the cow ? Therefore the cow is more than mother."

A boy asked Bapu if it was possible that Rama should have gone half mad with sorrow when Sita was taken away. Bapu replied : " Who knows that Rama indulged in lamentations on that occasion ? What we read in the Ramayana is mere poetical fancy. There is no doubt that such lamentations are unworthy of a wise man. Therefore we should hold that Rama of our conception could never be unnerved like that."

One sister wrote that she could not write her diary because of laziness. Bapu observed that laziness could not be the only cause ; it was not easy to depict oneself in one's true colours.

We hear the cuckoo singing at 4 a. m. every day and today at 10:15 p.m. too.

Doyle replied that he was inquiring about Kaka at once and hoped to receive an answer during this week, and that he would personally look after him when he went to Belgam in a short time. His gentleness is evident in his letter.

April 26, 1932

At 9 a.m. Bapu takes lemon juice with a little soda bicarb. This drink is prepared by the Sardar. Nothing escapes Bapu's eagle eye; he therefore said to the Sardar: "Is it necessary for you to take a course in nursing? Don't you see you are holding the spoon wrongly? It should really be held only with the handle, for the other end is meant to stir the drink with. Again you wiped the spoon with your handkerchief with which you wipe your mouth. That is not right. As you are aware, a nurse in the operation theatre touches nothing with her hands. She handles everything with pincers. She would be dismissed if she used her hands. We should reach the same standard of cleanliness. Glasses from which a person has drunk should be washed before you put them in their place again. Otherwise they often enough remain unwashed."

Miss Royden sent her letters to Eric Drummond and Sir John Simon as well as the replies she received and wrote:

"I hesitated to send you the correspondence because I fear you must think that our first concern should have been India, but I believe you will understand and sympathize with our sense of the extreme urgency of the hostilities between China and Japan in the Far East. I therefore send these letters for your information."

A sentence in a letter sent to Sir Eric Drummond, Secretary General of the League of Nations by Miss Royden, Herbert Grey and H. R. L. Sheppard reads as if it were penned by Bapu:

"We have come to the conclusion that the only way which would prove effective in that case is that men and women who believe it to be their duty should volunteer to place themselves unarmed between the combatants."

Again this is a paragraph from the letter to Sir John Simon:

"Among the little band of six or seven hundred who have volunteered for service in the Peace Army are quite

a remarkable number of ex-servicemen who express their horror at the idea of a repetition of the experience of the last war, and their willingness to die rather than plunge the world into it again ; and of parents of men who were killed in the war or of children who (they fear) may grow up to be involved in another war. We are convinced that thousands in the country and elsewhere would volunteer if they believed that the League would take their offer seriously."

Bapu replied to Miss Royden as follows :

"I thank you for your letter enclosing the correspondence between yourself and Sir Eric Drummond and Sir John Simon. When I read about your movement, I did not think that you were in anyway showing preference to China over India. I then felt that you were quite right in concentrating your energy over a situation that threatened to involve bloodshed on a vast scale and that too by the adoption of the method of Satyagraha."

The Sardar asked : "Is that all ? "

Bapu : "Do you want me to ask her to do some such thing for India ? "

The Sardar : "No, no. We shall solve our problem ourselves. But tell her that we too would join their Peace Army if we were free." *

APRIL 27, 1932

Wrote out some more chapters of my abridgment of the *Autobiography* which were then revised by Bapu.

In the evening the Sardar said : "Last year we had a good shoemaker in jail but there isn't any now. I had to send back a pair of sandals as it was badly done." Bapu asked him if he might get some leather and make a pair for the Sardar : "Let me see," he continued, "if I am still able to practise the art which I had acquired long ago. I was a very good shoemaker indeed. And a specimen of my workmanship can be inspected in the Khadi Pratishthan Museum at Sodepur. When Sorabji Adajania came

* For a letter written on the 26th see *Selected Letters*, Second Series, (Navajivan), VI. *Ed.*

to India, Satyanand Bose showered much affection on him. He therefore asked me to send Satyanand a pair of shoes made by me. The pair was duly sent. But Satyanandbabu was full of humility. He said he could not use it as footwear but only as an ornament for his head. He therefore sent it to the museum."

Then turning to me Bapu said, "Mahadev, I do not remember to have read in your abridgment anything about our activity as shoemakers on Tolstoy Farm. I then made quite a number of pairs. Kallenbach * learnt the art at a Trappist monastery and taught it to us."

Mills writes to say that he is leaving India for China:

"We have got marching orders and we won't come back until you have made peace with Government."

Bapu thought all foreign correspondents were probably being sent away from India. Sir Samuel Hoare was perhaps responsible for this. He was active in the World War and was now dealing with our movement as if it were war. If India passed through two more such years, all the dirt in the movement would be washed out, and we would become fit to take the reins of administration into our hands.

I asked Bapu if we would really have to wait for two years. He replied: "One never can tell. But it is quite possible. And we are quite happy here. We are working and passing our days in peace and tranquillity."

Harilal † writes an insolent letter to Bapu, suggesting that his daughter Manu should be removed from his sister-in-law Bali's charge, and complaining about Bali's assault on him. Bapu sent him a long reply, at the end of which he wrote with a bleeding heart: "I will not still give up hope of your reformation even as I do not despair of myself. I was a bad man before you were born. But I have been gradually improving since then. There is no reason therefore why I should lose hope altogether. And

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* See *Satyagraha in South Africa* (Navajivan), Chap. XXXIV, pp. 240-241. *Ed.*

† Gandhiji's eldest son. *Ed.*

I will continue to hope until you and I are alive, and preserve this letter of yours contrary to my usual practice, so that some day you may repent of having written such a foolish thing. I keep the letter not to taunt you but to enjoy a laugh over it if ever God is so good to me. We are all liable to err. But it is our duty to correct our errors. I trust you will correct yours."

APRIL 28, 1932

Sarojini Devi has been brought to this prison, we hear.

Talking about Gulzarilal Nanda's illness Bapu said, "I hope he will recover. He is the second Panjabi to make Gujarat his second home like Pyarelal. And his position is more difficult than Pyarelal's, for Pyarelal has no encumbrances while he has wife and children who do not see eye to eye with him. And he is a great organizer and lover of truth."

This evening I sang the hymn अब हम अमर भये etc. ('We are now immortal'). Bapu said, "This must be omitted in the new edition of our hymnal. I believe that a man cannot be free(*mukta*) from the cycle of birth and death while he is still alive. And if a man were thus free he would not talk about it. Our hymnal should only include songs of *bhakti* (devotion), but this one is argumentative." I put in a defence of the hymn, but Bapu said its good points were shared by other hymns.

Continuing Bapu said, "Similarly I have never fully reconciled myself to singing the verse तद् ब्रह्म निष्कलमहम् etc. ('I am the same Brahma') at the morning prayer. Then again I do not like the hymn दिलमां दीवो करो। etc. ('Light a lamp in your heart')."

About the hymn हरिने भजतां etc. ('God has never been known to let down his devotees') I said there was nothing in it except the first line and a few names of devotees. But Bapu said, 'The whole garland of names is sweet to hear.'

To the Ashram sisters Bapu wrote a long letter from which I take the following:

"*Pinda* is our body, and *Brahmanda* is the universe. Now everything found in the body is found in the universe also; and if anything is not there in the former it is absent from the latter too. Our body is of the earth earthy. There are five elements on the earth (earth, water, fire, air, ether) as well as in the body. There is a variety of living beings on the earth and of living cells in the body. The body dies and is reborn; so the earth also undergoes transformation. And so on. From this we may infer that if we have true knowledge of the body, we shall have knowledge of the universe too, and need not go far afield in search of it. The body is at hand, and if we get to know it, we shall have attained our object. If we try to know the universe this knowledge must always remain incomplete. Therefore wise men have told us that there is nothing in the universe which is not in the body too, and therefore if we know the self, this knowledge embraces all knowledge whatever. But in the act of knowing the self we get to know something about other objects, and we have the right to derive what enjoyment we can from this external knowledge, as it is part of self-knowledge.

"We should not mix up the historic Krishna with the Krishna of the Gita who was not discussing the question of violence and non-violence. Arjuna was not averse to killing in general but only to killing his own relatives. Therefore Krishna suggested that in doing one's duty one may not treat one's relations differently from other people. In the age of the Gita the question whether one should or should not wage war was not raised by any important person. Indeed it appears to have been raised only in recent times. All Hindus in those days believed in *ahimsa* (non-violence), but what amounted to and what did not amount to violence was a question debated then as it is debated now. Many things which we look upon as non-violent will perhaps be considered violent by future generations. For we destroy life when we use milk or cereals as food. Therefore it is quite possible that posterity will give up milk production and the cultivation of food

grains. Just as we consider ourselves as non-violent in spite of our consumption of milk and food grains, so also in the age of the Gita fighting was such a common thing that no one thought it was contrary to *ahimsa*. Therefore I do not see anything wrong in the Gita having used warfare as an illustration. But if we study the whole of the Gita and examine its descriptions of *sthitaprajna*, *brahmabhuta*, *bhakta* and *yogi*, we can reach only this conclusion that the Krishna of the Gita was the very incarnation of *ahimsa*, and his exhortation to Arjuna to fight does not detract from his greatness. On the other hand if he had given him different advice, his knowledge would have been proved inadequate, and he would not have been entitled to be called *Yogeshvara* (the prince of Yogis) and *Purna Avatara* (the perfect incarnation). You must look all this up in my * *Anasaktiyoga*." §

APRIL 29, 1932

Bapu received Hoare's letter. 'They are one and all lost to all sense of shame,' said the Sardar to him. 'And you will come round to my view by and by. You thought Benthall to be a good man, but now you know better.

Bapu replied, 'I do not think it necessary to change my opinion. What we were told about Benthall was not true. The opinion which I had formed of Hoare squares with subsequent events. So does my opinion of Sankey which was different from that of every one else.'

I said, 'Even the Sardar admits that Macdonald and Willingdon are not as courteous as Sir Samuel.'

Bapu remarked, 'Even Irwin perhaps is not capable of showing that stately courtesy. Hoare has not declared the Congress to be an illegal organization, because as I am inclined to think he knows in his heart of hearts that he has to come to terms with Congress sooner or later. His reply as regards Harijan representation is as good as a

* Translated into English by Mahadev Desai under the title *The Gita According to Gandhi* (Navajivan). *Ed.*

§ For one more letter of the 28th see *Selected Letters*, Second Series, (Navajivan), VII. *Ed.*

committal. On other points of course he was not in a position to say anything.'

I added, 'Irwin's letter of condolence on the occasion of Maganlalbhai's death was never to be forgotten.' Bapu had forgotten, but the Sardar remembered it and said, 'Mahadev, if you give up the struggle, every one of them would write such fine letters just as the Sikh would honour you if you stopped shaving your hair.'

Received Ravindranath's letter along with Percy Bartlett's. Bartlett took the poet's appeal to the Viceroy who refused to have anything to do with it.

Bapu asked me for my interpretation of the move. I said, 'I think the poet appeals to both the parties, Congress as well as Government.' Bapu said, 'No, no. His words are "We in India" and he includes us in this description. He had thought of sending Bartlett here only because I am ready for conciliation, and not because he expects I should give up any demand or take some step.' I remarked that Bartlett at any rate had some such idea in his mind. Bapu observed that if he had thought of appealing to him (Gandhiji), he would have published the appeal in newspapers long ago.

* Ramdas and a Maharashtrian student met Bapu. Ramdas asked the Superintendent to let him meet us but in vain.

Bapu declares every day the result of his spinning. Today he spun 100 rounds out of 4 slivers and 102 out of 5 more. His yarn was well and tightly wound. He is sure the left hand will be better able to stand the strain as days go by.

APRIL 30, 1932

I asked Bapu to have a look at the introduction to my abridgment of the Autobiography. He criticized the very first sentence and said, 'Why should abridgment be difficult because translation is difficult? You may say that abridging it was difficult as the original was condensed itself. But abridgment cannot become difficult

* Gandhiji's third son. *Ed.*

on account of difficulty in translation. On the other hand a translator finds it easy to abridge the work he is translating. The rest of your introduction is unsuitable in an edition for students, though it may pass muster in a review. As a matter of fact you have only to say a few words about your method of abridgment. The publishers ask you to write 800 words, but we may not indulge in any such luxury. Our economy would be appreciated if we limited ourselves to 200 words where 600 were to be written.'

I corrected the introduction accordingly and my second draft was approved of by Bapu.

Upon reading a report of Lord Irwin's speech at Toronto the Sardar said to Bapu, 'See how your friend is behaving himself.' Bapu replied he was certainly his friend whose speech could be criticized only after a study of the full text.

May 1, 1932

Bapu was deeply pained to read Sankey's article in *Newsletter*. He said it was a vicious piece of writing and he felt he should write to its author about it. The opinion he had formed of him (Sankey) was being confirmed by events.

Bapu dictated the letter to Sankey. The Sardar who was listening to the dictation remarked: 'Instead of writing such a longish letter, why don't you simply tell him that he is a liar?'

Bapu laughed and replied, 'In fact I have said something stronger still. I say his conduct is ungentlemanly. I go further and say that he has betrayed a friend or colleague. This is something that would cut an Englishman to the quick, but I have written what I felt. People like Shafi and the Aga Khan who met him every now and then must have told him all these lies. And he not only believed them to be true, but never asked me about them and throws the blame on me now when I am in prison.'

The keenness of Bapu's feeling is evident from this sentence in the first draft of the letter :

'You have given judgment against me on evidence of which I have been kept in ignorance, and your judgment has been given at a time when I have been rendered incapable of defending myself.'

Part of the sentence was later replaced with the following : 'You have given it after rendering me incapable of defending myself.'

This makes the betrayal still more heinous. Bapu said, 'It is not true again that my claim is exaggerated. Why should our claim to independence be considered exaggerated ? It may be so considered if I propose to reduce England to slavery. I set forth the Congress demand in my speeches but during the discussions I dealt with any number of formulas.'

Bapu wrote to Irwin also but cancelled the letter and said, 'I must see the full text of the speech. Why should we make any assumptions ? I shall see later if it is necessary to write.'

He also wrote to Hoare a letter in which 'I am deeply grateful' was subsequently replaced by 'I am grateful.'

May 2, 1932

Received a wire about the death of Yashoda, the wife of Dahyabhai, the Sardar's son. The poor thing underwent no end of suffering during such a short span of life. Dahyabhai nursed her with great devotion. For her it was a release from living death as Bapu put it.

A few minutes before this wire was received I read about the assassination of Mr Douglas, the Collector of Medinipur, and was upset by that news too. I said, 'There is no doubt that the lives of Englishmen in Bengal are in jeopardy. What about their wives and children ? When we place ourselves in the position of others, we realize the wickedness of violence.' Bapu remarked, 'Englishmen must have been in the same condition in 1857.'

To Parashuram who criticized X's marriage Bapu replied :

'It is not for us to find fault with any one else and sit in judgment over him. We should be exhausted judging ourselves only, and so long as we notice a single fault in ourselves and wish our relations and friends not to forsake us in spite of such fault, we have no right to poke our nose into other people's conduct. If in spite of ourselves we notice another's fault, we should ask him himself if we have the power and think it proper to do so, but we have no right to ask anybody else.

'Now I will answer your question. X's action may not be to our liking, but I cannot arrive at any decision so long as I do not hear what he himself has to say about it. I think it wrong to hold that whatever might have been done by the Prophet can be done by his followers as well without a breach of propriety. Smaller men have no right to do everything that was done by a great man, but if they do it, the results are disastrous as we have seen. But Hindus, Musalmans and others do not seem to be observing this golden rule in every case. On the other hand they argue that they are free to act as the *avataras* had acted, and behave accordingly. Such being the case, I was not surprised to find X citing the example of the Prophet.' *

Another sheaf of letters from the women Satyagrahi prisoners. What fine letters do the Maharashtra women write ! Bapu said, 'They bear the clear mark of culture on the face of them.'

What an irony of fate that both the daughter and the mother of magistrate M. should be in jail ?

MAY 3, 1932

Commenting on Sir Samuel's speech Bapu said, 'I like what he says. He does not want any mediator, as none enjoys his confidence. There is a pleasure in fighting such a man, and we will get what we want from him

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* For another letter written on the second see *Selected Letters*, Second Series (Navajivan), VIII. *Ed.*

alone. He is a thousand time better than Sankey who thinks one thing and says another. But Hoare says what he thinks. Once I asked him if he had no confidence in the ability of any of the large number of people there. He replied, "To tell you the truth, I have not." And I congratulated him upon his honesty on that score alone.'

Bapu wrote to Percy Bartlett to say that he agreed with Ravindranath in his longing for peace and conciliation. He would not take a single step which might be an obstruction in the path of peace and would seize every opportunity to take steps calculated to lead to peace, only provided that they did not compromise his country's honour.

This time letters posted by us do not reach the addressees but are intercepted by the police.

Malaviyaji has been set free. The Major gave a good explanation for this. He said no one could be said to have broken the law so long as he had not disobeyed an official order. Malaviyaji was arrested before he could disobey any order and was now released. The Sardar said four or five times: 'So Malaviyaji is free!' That is his method of cogitating over any piece of news we receive.

MAY 4, 1932

* The Superintendent told us about the misbehaviour of some Satyagrahi prisoners from Bombay in the extension, one of whom had inflicted a three-inch-deep wound on another's head. 'The punishment for this,' he continued, 'is flogging. But I did not award it. I only gave notice that it would have to be awarded if such incidents recurred. During the entire period of my service I have punished prisoners with flogging twice or thrice only. To me it seems worse than hanging. In one of these cases one prisoner had nearly destroyed another's eye.'

Manibehn Parikh, Shankarlal, Vanu, Mohan and Dipak met me. Narahari has lost 28 pounds in weight.

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* This morning Gandhiji wrote a letter, for which see *Selected Letters*, Second Series, X. *Ed.*

This would not matter, were it not for the wicked atmosphere in his prison. Manibehn was in tears as she told me this.

Malaviyaji has issued a fine statement today. Bapu said it was worthy of him. There was not a single weak word in it, and it was the shortest statement he could make. It constituted a challenge to Government.

The *Leader* congratulates Government upon releasing Malaviyaji and calls their act magnanimous. Bapu observed, 'So it is as if Malaviyaji had been sentenced to capital punishment and if the sentence had been commuted to one of transportation for life.'

MAY 5, 1932

Newspapers are indulging in speculation as regards the recommendations of the Franchise Committee. Referring to this Bapu observed, 'The franchise, no matter how wide it is, is no good if power is not transferred. On the other hand, if power is transferred even a narrow franchise will serve the purpose.'

Received the Magan spinning-wheel which can be plied with both the hands. Bapu is going to work upon it from tomorrow.

Manibehn Parikh, Dhiru, Kusum and Girdhari met Bapu. Bapu said Manibehn was weeping all the time. She could restrain herself before me, but not before Bapu. And no wonder, for a person gives way to grief before another from whom she expects consolation.*

MAY 6, 1932

Bapu worked upon the Magan wheel for about 2 hours, and was happy when he had spun 24 rounds upon it. The Sardar was laughing all the time and said, 'You will waste more cotton than you spin.' Bapu replied, 'You also laughed at my using the left hand in spinning. But see how I am drawing the thread, which will not break so long as you do not look at it.'

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* For a letter written on the fifth, see *Selected Letters*, Second Series (Navajivan), XI. *Ed.*

Received the news of the death of Gangadevi. She knew that death was coming, and so was on her guard and died with the name of Rama (God) on her lips. Bapu wrote that she had done credit to the Ashram in death as well as in life, and sent this wire :

'We were all touched learn Gangadevi's death. Am happy that she lived well and died well with faith everlasting. No wonder Totaramji [her husband] is happy.'

When we received this news, Bapu said, 'What a noble death has this illiterate woman died ! Both she and her husband are an ornament to the Ashram. Totaramji went out to Fiji as an indentured labourer, and there married the daughter of some other labourer. Thus both are labourers, but what a fine life have they lived ? '

May all of us die in the same manner as Gangadevi did. Never mind other things, but one wishes one drew his last breath in the Ashram with Ramanama on his lips like that lady. In order to die such a peaceful death, our life also has to be differently fashioned, and there is the difficulty.

Gangabehn Vaidya does not allow other women Satyagrahis to accept the jail vegetable even if they wish. Sarojinidevi complained to Bapu against this. Therefore Bapu wrote to Gangabehn as follows :

'Let me explain to you our duty as Satyagrahi prisoners. Those of us who have received a sentence of rigorous imprisonment should with a cheerful mind perform the tasks assigned to them. If we have not the necessary skill, we must acquire it under teachers sent to us by jail authorities. We should work harder than ordinary prisoners if possible, and thus do credit to our Satyagraha. You know how to weave. I suggest that you may teach it to your fellow-prisoners. Then again we should understand that whatever is produced in jail is the property of the nation and whatever is spent, no matter by whom, is spent from national coffers. Therefore we should take delight in producing whatever we can. And

you should revise your joint decision to reject the jail vegetable.'

The kittens here now enjoy our company. They sit in Bapu's lap at prayer time, play with us and kick up a row at dinner time. The Sardar teases them. When they have to ease themselves, they go away at a distance, make a hole in the ground, attend to nature's need and then cover the waste with earth. If there is not sufficient earth in one place, they move elsewhere where there is enough of it. Bapu said, 'The gods should shower flowers upon these kittens from the sky.' He also referred to them in * a letter to Mirabehn.

Sarojinidevi wrote to her daughter Lila that she was permitted to sleep in the Taj Mahal after her arrest, and this reminded Lila of mediaeval chivalry. To her Bapu wrote:

'I do not know that I would share Lilamani's enthusiasm. Chivalry is made of sterner stuff. Chivalrous knight is he who is exquisitely correct in his conduct towards perfect strangers who are in need of help but who can make no return to him and who are unable even to utter a few words of thanks.'

Bapu wrote to Doyle complaining against the miscarriage and late delivery of letters, and suggesting that Kaka, Prabhudas and Narahari might be kept in the same place in Belgam prison.

MAY 7, 1932

Dahyabhai came for interview. He wept while his little son smiled. The poor child was too young to feel the pang of separation from mother. It reminded Bapu of his own condition in similar circumstances. But what about Dahyabhai? The Sardar lost his wife at 30 but was able to make a fine thing of his widowerhood, a rare achievement indeed.

Dahyabhai has great difficulty in coming to Poona for interview on Saturdays. The Superintendent could easily let him see the Sardar on Sundays. He was asked what

* See *Bapu's Letters to Mira* (Navajivan), No. 152, p. 182. *Ed.*

he did on Sundays and replied he took his weekly rest. But he has no idea of looking to Dahyabhai's convenience. He is a good man, but his false ideas of power and prestige are a limiting factor.

Received a letter from Upton Sinclair who has also sent a complete set of his books including his autobiography and a pamphlet on his fitness to receive the Nobel Prize. Bapu wrote to him to say he could not understand why this pamphlet was sent to him.

MAY 8, 1932

Bapu is trying to make the Sardar take interest in a variety of things. He received a book from Hiralal Shah yesterday, and suggested that the Sardar should repair it, and he himself would teach him how to bind books if he did not know it already. While taking the usual walk this morning, Bapu asked the Sardar whether he was fond of doing odd jobs since childhood or he had become a mechanic only in jail. The Sardar replied he had no previous experience but he could do things upon seeing how they were done. Bapu remarked that this was due to natural instinct. Babu Chittaranjan Das could not even thread a needle, while Pandit Motilal could do quite a number of things. I said Motilalji introduced at home a machine in order to sterilize water and thus gave germ-free water to all patients. The Sardar rebound Hiralal's book and crushed almonds on a little machine.*

Pandit Khare asked Bapu whether the idea that God is truth was suggested to him by हिरण्मयेन पात्रेण etc. etc. in Ishopanishad (verse 15) or it struck him independently. Bapu gave him a frank answer : 'I have no idea if I had that verse in view at that time. These things spring up from my heart as if they were quite original. And as a matter of fact they are grounded in my personal experience.'

Bapu was equally frank in his talk with the Superintendent one day on miracles and spiritual power.

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* For two letters written on the 8th see *Selected Letters*, Second Series, XIII, XIV, *Ed.*

He was asked if such power was a reality, and if it was, what was the use of it. He replied, 'The acquisition of such power is a stage in the pilgrim's progress. But he should not be aware of it, nor should he use it. It might however be working without any effort on his part.' The Superintendent asked how a man could be unaware of his power.

'Well, I was thus unaware myself.'

'Do you possess any such power?'

'Yes. Not the power of working miracles, but of another kind. I have no idea what I am going to say on any occasion but God gives me the appropriate word. This is power indeed, but it should be generated spontaneously.'

May 9, 1932

Bapu had asked me to write something to be sent to the Ashram. I therefore wrote five scenes of a play which I had projected in Nasik prison. But Bapu remarked that such things could not be sent from jail. The authorities would not allow them to pass, but if they did, they would make themselves liable to censure. The play might be written out in jail and printed after I was released.

Bapu has been observing the behaviour of the cats. His letter to the Ashram today is devoted to that subject. The cat's concentration in observing the lizard was perhaps not noticed by our sages, or else they would have suggested that we must concentrate on God in the same manner. Yesterday a lizard was coming near the cat, which began to shake its tail, but then it turned back and went away in the opposite direction. The cat began to cry as if asking it to be good enough to enter its own mouth and not to go away like that. Englishmen who honestly believe that India should continue to be a British possession remind me of this cat. The cat is their prototype, not the snake.

May 10, 1932

Bapu could ply the Magan wheel yesterday with the right hand and was thus very cheerful. But today no work was possible with it. In the morning Bapu told the Sardar

that he could work upon the wheel if it was not under his (the Sardar's) curse. He persevered till 9 or 10, but nothing came out of it. Only the slivers were wasted. The same tale was repeated in the afternoon. Both Bapu and I tried to coax the wheel, but still it was on strike. Rising from his afternoon nap the Sardar asked Bapu to leave the wheel alone. But Bapu insisted that his caravan would march and never stop. Had he not occupied a dignified seat near Sir Samuel? Pointing an accusing finger at the waste lying on the floor the Sardar remarked that Bapu had spun quite a lot. In the evening Bapu was thoroughly knocked out, having begun with the left hand and exerted himself for five mortal hours, so that sleep claimed him for her own before 8 as I was massaging his feet. As he went to sleep, he said to the Sardar, 'Please note that the wheel is sure to work tomorrow, for faith moves mountains.' The Sardar doubted if faith had anything to do with the wheel. But Bapu observed that there was scope for it in everything.

Shri Elwin has sent the following words of Shri Ramakrishna Paramahamsa written on a piece of paper with ornamental letters:

'When you are at work, use only one of your hands and let the other touch the feet of the Lord. When your work is suspended, take His feet in both your hands and put them over your heart.'

I suggested to Bapu that this was sent to him perhaps in connection with his exhortation to use both the hands. Bapu remarked that there was nothing in Ramakrishna's words to suggest that he was opposed to our working with both our hands. On the other hand the saint wanted us to use both of them.

To a lady student of the Gita who asked how Krishna could have supported violent warfare, Bapu wrote:

'In our study of the Gita we have only to consider what was the question for which an answer was sought. If in answering a question a teacher went beyond the scope of that question, he would be considered stupid. For the questioner's attention is concentrated on his own

question; he is not ready to listen to other things, a discussion about which he can neither understand nor appreciate. Judged by this standard, Krishna's is a perfect answer. And when after finishing the first chapter of the Gita we enter upon the second, we find that it teaches *ahimsa* pure and simple. To look upon Krishna as a *purna avatara* (perfect incarnation) should not mean that we can obtain from the Gita direct answers to all the questions that arise from day to day just as we find the meaning of words by looking up a dictionary. This would not be desirable even if it were possible; for in that case there would be nothing like progress or discovery for mankind. Human intelligence would then simply atrophy from disuse. Therefore questions that arise in each age must be solved by the people of that age through their own effort. Our difficulties at present such as world wars must be met by applying the general principles derived from the Gita and similar books, which can be of help only to a limited extent. Real help can come only from our endeavours and struggles. In books on Indian medicine we find various virtues attributed to a number of drugs. But their descriptions can serve us only as a guide. So long as these drugs have not been tested in actual practice, our theoretical knowledge of them not only serves no useful purpose but is even burdensome. The same is true of the questions in life that clamour for solution.'

To a woman who asked why a widow should not be allowed to have *tilak* (red mark) on her forehead like married women as the soul was immortal, Bapu replied:

'I am inclined to think that just as a widower does not bear upon his body any indication of the fact that he has lost his wife, so also a widow need not have any external marks indicating her condition. This opinion is grounded only in natural justice and not in the immortality of the soul.'

I said, 'Bapu, your poor correspondent is not aware that you are asking even married women not to have the mark on the forehead and not to wear bangles.'

Bapu replied, 'I will tell her this if you like. But we must take our stand on the ground of justice only. So long as all married women have the forehead mark and wear bangles, how can I ask widows to discard these things? I argued and argued with Ba but failed to convince her. Formerly I held firmly to the view that widows should not remarry, and said that widowers too may not contract a second marriage. But then I noticed that widowers could not be prevailed upon to accept my advice. Therefore in justice perpetual widowhood cannot be enforced on widows.'

In the course of a reply to Bapu Natarajan writes:

'I agree with you that exhibitions of the kind you refer to are repulsive, and as they serve no useful purpose, they should be discouraged by public opinion. They recall a saying of Ramakrishna Paramahamsa's, which I read somewhere. Some one asked him if it was possible to walk on water. "Yes," was his reply, "but sensible people pay a pice to the ferryman."

'Apropos of my son's marriage [with a Christian girl] our venerable friend C. Vijayaraghav of Salem wrote to him congratulating us and added that his only wish was that she might become Hindu, at least an Arya Samajist. I replied that my Hinduism was wide enough to cover all the great religions without any conversion. I rather feel you think the same way.

'Have you read Countess Tolstoy's diaries?....It is a book which all who are devoted to the woman's cause should read....'

MAY 11, 1932

The Superintendent gave us the news that Bapu could see 15 non-political associates out of the 19 whom he had named. Orders about the remaining four including Nargis-behn would be issued later. As regards the medical examination of the Sardar he said they believed there were full facilities for his treatment in jail and there was no need to call in experts from outside. Thereupon Bapu said, 'You are the custodians of a prisoner's body, but he has

the right to insist upon his body being entrusted to experts of his own choice. If the Sardar agrees, I would have him fight out this oppression. And then mere oral answers will not do. I must have a written reply from Government.'

'But the letter was addressed to me,' said the Superintendent.

'That was because of your suggestion. We must have an official reply.'

At this the Superintendent softened a little, and promised to induce Major Mehta to recommend an operation and to inform Government that the Sardar wished to be operated upon by his own surgeon.

The Superintendent once said that he spent Rs 120 on Pelman's course, but found it was of no earthly use. He also talked about the outlaw Dahyalo who asked to see a cow on the day he was executed. And so did a Musalman (Vora).

Bapu was more successful with the wheel today and spun 131 rounds in 3 hours. He invited the Sardar to rejoice in his success, but the Sardar pointed to the waste lying on the floor. Bapu promised to stop the manufacture of those ropes too by and by.

May 12, 1932

While Bapu was busy tackling the Magan wheel this morning, he said, 'This is a most useful training for me.' I remarked there was no need to tell me, as I was an eyewitness. Bapu replied, 'That is not what I mean. You perhaps feel that my undertaking this labour at the age of 63 is a training. But I say that I am enjoying the work at this age, and it is a great training for me. There is an exquisite taste in labour, which only the labourer can feel.'

Today also Bapu plied the wheel for 3 hours and was thoroughly exhausted. When I was massaging his feet in the evening he said, 'Now I shall lie down.' When the massage was over, he was fit as a fiddle in half an hour, and dictated a long letter to Purushottam who wrote that according to the Jains even compassion is included in attachment (*raga*), albeit a desirable one, and therefore

Bapu's action in putting an ailing calf out of pain was not worthy of a *vitaraga* (one who is free from attachment) :

'I have your excellent letter. The Jains emphasize justice pure and simple, but this is not properly understood. Pure justice is generally supposed to mean pure morality, just decision. But I have not used the word in that sense. What I wanted to point out was that the Jains are apt to carry things to their logical conclusion. But mere logic sometimes leads to wrong conclusions and is disastrous in results. This is not the fault of logic, but all the data needed in order to arrive at a proper conclusion are not available at all times. Again one who hears or reads a word does not always understand it in the speaker's or writer's sense. Therefore the heart, that is devotion, faith and knowledge grounded in experience are invested with greater importance. Logic is a matter of mere intelligence, which cannot apprehend things that are clear as crystal to the heart. On the other hand the intellect often believes in certain things, but if they do not appeal to the heart, they must be rejected. You yourself will be able to imagine any number of cases as illustrations of what I am driving at. Justice in the sense in which I use the word just now is never an end in itself. Justice and action free from attachment are both means. Justice is a matter for the intellect; detached action springs from the heart. The intellect cannot lead us to detachment.

'Now I shall deal with the question you raise. Mercy (*daya*) and *ahimsa* are not two different things. Mercy is never opposed to *ahimsa*; and if it is, it is not mercy. Mercy is *ahimsa* in the flesh. A *vitaraga* man cannot be without mercy. On the other hand he is the very image of mercy. And when it is a question of mercy to millions of men, to say that such mercy is not free from attachment is not to understand the meaning of mercy or else to give the word a new meaning. We generally use the word *daya* (mercy) in the same sense as Tulsidas' verse does: दया धर्मको मूल है पाप(v. l. देह)मूल अभिमान।

Daya here is used in the sense of *ahimsa*. *Ahimsa* is a quality of the disembodied soul alone. But when she takes over a body, *ahimsa* takes shape in her as *daya*. Therefore my action in putting the ailing calf out of pain was a visible image of the purest *ahimsa*. To suffer in our own person is the badge of our tribe. But to make others suffer is something opposed to the nature of the soul. If I had dealt with the calf as I did in order to assuage my own pain, it would not have been *ahimsa*, but it was *ahimsa* to assuage the calf's pain. Indeed *ahimsa* implies an inability to go on witnessing another's pain. From it thus springs mercy, heroism and all other virtues associated with *ahimsa*. It is bad logic to say that we must look on while others suffer. Again it is not always a fact that the pain of death is greater for men than the pain of living. It is we ourselves who have made of death a fearful thing. People who are looked upon as savages as well as martial races have no such fear of death. And in the West there is now a cult which prefers death to a life of continuous pain. Extreme fear of death seems to be a sign of ignorance or of pseudo-knowledge, and it is responsible for the twist given to *ahimsa* by some of us and especially the Jains. The result is that real *ahimsa* has almost disappeared from the country. A woman who jumps into a well in anger will seize a rope if it is offered to her, but one who has jumped into it with a view to suicide will reject the rope with scorn. Harakiri among the Japanese is a well-known illustration of this. Whether it springs from knowledge or from ignorance is here irrelevant. I only say that in a multitude of cases we come across people preferring death to life. And they shoot crippled animals in the West as they feel that animals are not much afraid of death and will prefer death to a life of unbearable pain. This idea may not be based on fact and therefore it is our duty to behave as if life is as dear to animals as it is to men.

'If you have followed me thus far, there is not much to say from the social standpoint. Where people are non-violently minded, there is little risk of the case of the

ailing calf being utilized for unworthy purposes. And animals are killed of course where *ahimsa* is not a popular doctrine. Therefore my action in putting the calf out of pain is not likely to add to the amount of violence in the world. In doing as I did it was not necessary to know all the possible consequences of such action. I might perhaps hold my hand if I knew that the calf was otherwise destined to live for ever. But as a matter of fact we as well as the calf are liable to die any day. Therefore it was only a question of the calf living some time longer. There was no selfish object in putting it out of pain; the only thing in view was its own happiness. Therefore even supposing my action was wrong, it did not involve an event which would never have occurred in the calf's case. . . .This line of thinking is opposed to views current in India. But I believe the Hindus have become so cowardly and lazy that fundamental *ahimsa* has been forgotten, and reduced to insignificant mercy to animals, whereas *ahimsa* is a most powerful emotion and gives rise to multitudinous forms of beneficence. If it becomes manifest even in one man in all its splendour, its light would be greater than the light of the sun. But where is such *ahimsa* to be found ? '

While the above was being dictated, we had a discussion about the two readings in Tulsidas's verse: Bapu said ,' I have heard both of them, but I prefer to read *deha*(body).' I remarked that the Vedantic idea that pride is the root of the body did not fit in well here. Perhaps the poet wanted to say that mercy is the root of religion and pride is the root of sin. Bapu said, 'If we read *deha*, he means that the body being the root of pride is an obstacle in the way of mercy. But to spend ourselves to the uttermost in service is purest mercy. This mercy should be cherished as long as we live.' I objected that that was so but it was not what the poet meant to say. Again Bapu's interpretation was too subtle for the common man, while he could easily understand that pride is the root of sin. In any case, the latter half of the verse had nothing to do with the subject-matter of the letter.

MAY 13, 1932

Sharadabehn wrote to Bapu asking for permission to allow cloth woven on handlooms with mill-spun yarn to be exhibited at the Swadeshi exhibition. Bapu replied that he could not give any opinion from jail. There was no need to stick to his views, and she should act as she thought fit in the circumstances. In the same letter Bapu remarked that it was not all luxury in America which could show many examples of self-control and devotion to service.

The Sardar is bent upon playing the Vidushak (jester)'s part in the fullest measure. Bapu said, 'Well, I am going to bed.' The Sardar remarked, 'Certainly. We must keep in practice against the day that we shall sleep never to wake again.'

We receive letters addressed to 'Yeravda Mandir' (temple). The Sardar remarked, 'This is indeed a temple, but there is continuous strife in fixing the shares of the temple offerings.'

In a letter to Devadas * Bapu gave a graphic description of his various studies at present; spinning, Urdu, observing the sky, economics, writing the Ashram history, Ruskin. How can he do all these things at a time?

Sir Samuel's speech has been reproduced by the 'Hindu' *in extenso*. I read to Bapu the portion in which he had attacked Monsieur Privat. He remarked it was sheer Toryism, pride of status based on birth and contempt for all others who could not claim such status. Their argument would not only not be answered but not even considered. This gave Bapu deep pain.

MAY 16, 1932

Pained to receive the news of horrible riots in Bombay.

Bapu wrote 45 letters today. In the letter to the Ashram he dealt with an Arab's renunciation which reminded us of Sir Philip Sidney.

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* Gandhiji's youngest son. *Ed.*

About keeping a diary, he wrote: 'It should be comprehensive, and place on record even the most secret thoughts. We must not have anything to hide from others. Therefore we need not be anxious about anyone else reading our diary. However we must not note down the faults of others or anything they have told us in confidence. Our diary may be inspected by the Ashram secretary or his deputy, but nothing in it is to be kept back from anybody else.'

To one who complained that he found it dull to read the Gita every day, Bapu wrote: 'It is dull, because you do not think over it. If you read it with the idea in your mind that it is our mother guiding us from day to day, you will not find it uninteresting. After the daily reading, you should ponder over it for a minute, and then you will perceive something new. Only a perfect man could get nothing from it. But for those who fall into error every day the Gita is a saviour of which he will never get tired.'

In answer to some one's questions he wrote: 'An *acharya* (teacher) is one who behaves himself and thus sets us an example of good behaviour. True individuality consists in reducing oneself to zero. The secret of life is selfless service. The highest ideal for us is to become *vitaraga* (free from attachment). Ethical rules were framed by *rishis* (seers) on the basis of personal experience. A *rishi* is one who has realized things for himself. *Sannyasa* in the Gita is renunciation of actions inspired by desire (*kamya*). He is a man who is the ruler over his body. Beauty is an internal quality which is not visible to the physical eye.'

Received a letter from Phulchand who is in Visapur prison. Thirteen lines in it were scored out by the jail authorities. To him Bapu replied: 'We need not worry over such incidents. We are prisoners free to do only what the jailer allows us to do. Time was when prisoners were not allowed to read books or write letters, were given insufficient food, kept in fetters day and night and made to sleep on straw. Let us therefore offer thanks to God for

what we get. But we must preserve our self-respect at any cost.

'I hope every one of you there is making the best use of his time. We never get so much leisure outside as in jail. We should read what books we get. And if we do not have books, we can think. We must be active in one way or another. We make one serious mistake, namely that we waste Government property or time as if it were not ours. Government property is also national property at present in the charge of Government. Therefore let us make a good use of whatever falls into our hands. To work and produce goods in jail means adding to the wealth of the nation. The fact that the Government is manned by foreigners does not affect my argument. But I must stop, for if I proceed further, I might talk politics which is forbidden to us as prisoners.'

MAY 17, 1932

The horrible Bombay riots still continue. May God guide us to the right path.

Pyarelal's mother asked how we may see God. Bapu replied, 'We cannot see God with these eyes. God is spirit without body and is therefore visible only to the eye of faith. If there are no evil thoughts troubling our mind and no fears but constant cheerfulness in our heart, that is an indication of God's presence in ourselves. Indeed He is there at all times, but we fail to notice His presence as we have no faith, and thus undergo much suffering. When once we have cultivated real faith, calamities cease to upset us.'

To another who asked about *pranayam* (control of breath) he wrote : 'I have no experience of it. So I cannot say anything about it. However we cannot go nearer to God by physical acts, but by devotion and conduct inspired by such devotion. *Pranayam* and the like are an instrument of cleanliness and thus gives us some peace of mind. That is all.'

To some one who asked if Bapu had met anybody who was never perturbed, he replied,

'Life without a ruffle would be a very dull business. It is not to be expected. Therefore it is wisdom to put up with all the roughnesses of life, and that is one of the rich lessons we learn from the Ramayan.'

Bapu asked me to read to the Sardar a poem by Iqbal which is included in a reader for Muslim boys sanctioned by Government and which can only instil into their minds hatred for non-Muslims instead of teaching them to look upon India as their fatherland.

The poem may be translated as follows:

'China is ours and so are Arabia and India. We are Muslims, and the whole world is our native land. The chief of the world's temples is the House of God; we are the protectors of that House and God is our protector. We have grown up under the shadow of swords; the dagger and the crescent are marked on our national flag. Monotheism is the treasure deposited in our breast. It is not possible to destroy us. O sky, we are not the people to be suppressed by untruth; you know because you have tested us a hundred times. O holy land, we have shed our blood in order to maintain thy prestige, and our blood still runs in thy veins. Our call to prayer resounded in the valleys of the West, and no one could stop the flood that is Islam. O waves of the Dajla (a river in Iraq), we are no strangers to you; we are still discussing your stories. O gardens of Spain, do you remember the day when our nest was built in the branches of your trees? The leader of our caravan was the Mir of Hijaz. It does our heart good to take his name. This song of Iqbal is as a stroke on the war drum; and the caravan of Islam is ready to march.'

May 18, 1932

Yesterday there was an incident which shows how we are prone to do injustice to a person without making full inquiries. As regards the lines scored out in Phulchand's letter, the Superintendent had said they contained nothing important. On this ground we built a superstructure. If he did not read that portion, how could

he say that it was not important? And if he did read it, it could not have been scored out at Visapur. He himself must have scored it out here on a typewriter. This guess of ours however proved to be incorrect when he came this morning and said, 'The lines were scored out at Visapur, but the jailer there sent along with the letter a translation and wrote to me that part of it was scored out. It was scored out perhaps because it contained the names of other prisoners. But there was nothing in it.'

We liked this candid statement and were sorry for the injustice we had done to the Superintendent if only in our own minds. This shows that we must not rush to conclusions.

Mirabehn and Manibehn came for interview. But Mirabehn was not allowed to meet Bapu, as such were the orders of Government. Both Mirabehn and Bapu were deeply shocked. Bapu wrote to Doyle that he could not meet others if he was not to be allowed to meet Mirabehn.

Comparing the present riots in Bombay with those in Kanpur, the Sardar said, 'Things do not seem to be as bad here as in Kanpur, where the police simply looked on and asked the people to seek protection from Gandhi.' But Bapu remarked he did not feel so sure about that. The British Government perhaps wanted to teach Bombay a lesson for playing a prominent part in the nationalist movement and to bring all its efforts to nought. Bapu did not appreciate the Governor's visit to the parts of Bombay which were the storm-centre. He was afraid it was perhaps intended to demonstrate to the citizens of Bombay that the Government was still in charge and none else could possibly take their place.

May 19, 1932

Received a letter from Mirabehn who was deeply disappointed but met the situation with fortitude. She had offered her services to Shri Purushottamdas and asked him to take from her whatever work he chose to. She was willing to risk her life in an attempt to bring the riots to an end. She was the bearer of a message from

Shri Purushottamdas, but the Superintendent did not pass it on to us. What could that poor fellow do?

Received yesterday a precious letter from Totaramji along with the Ashram post. His wife Gangadevi was given a dowry of £ 500 by her father. She did not spend a penny on her own person but spent that whole amount in building schools and helping school-children. Totaramji's farm of 70 acres was devastated in a day by a fierce cyclone. He and his wife lived on maize ground by themselves but Gangadevi would not hear of approaching her father for help. At the Sabarmati Ashram she looked upon the Ashram children as flesh of her flesh. Her mother on her death-bed had instructed her to take Ramanama, and she carried out her instruction. She was like the angel in Tolstoy's story who lived with a poor family and rendered service without ever being recognized.

Then there was a long letter from S in which he asked Bapu why he received special treatment in jails while he expected others to forgo it. He also wanted to know why we were unhappy when we saw a patient dying and thanked God if he recovered, and also why many bad men lived a long life while good men were cut off in their prime. To him Bapu wrote a long reply:

'X cannot be compelled to forgo the special privileges she enjoys. If she decided to give them up of her own accord, that will be quite another thing. To cite my example is both proper and improper, proper because so long as I am in active service, people are sure to follow my example and fall into mental confusion. For owing to a variety of reasons I am unable to live myself the life which I recommend to others. I know this is a defect in my leadership. To cite my example is improper, because my condition is different from that of my co-workers on account of my physical weakness, Mahatmaship and special environment. Even if I were a C class prisoner, my food would be different from others' in view of my physical condition and religious observances. This is more or less true of every prisoner, though he cannot get special diet with the same facility as I can. I have an interview every week instead

of every three months and carry on almost limitless correspondence. I have reconciled myself to this special treatment, as I have no personal friends and do not meet relations as relations. I meet them with an ethical purpose. The same thing is true of my correspondence. I cannot say if there is some self-indulgence lurking at the bottom, but there is little likelihood of it, for if my interviews and letters are stopped, I will not be perturbed at all. In 1930 I had no interviews, as my conditions were not accepted. In 1922 I similarly ceased to write letters. Then again we must bear in mind that I am kept apart from other prisoners. For all these reasons it would not be fair to institute a comparison between myself and any other prisoner. But it is no use arguing all this out before any one who cannot see that it needs no proof. There is a slight distinction between those who have been placed in A class by the magistrate of his own accord and others so placed by outside promptings, but it serves no useful purpose. The ideal of course is that there should not be any classes at all, and therefore those who have been placed in a so-called higher class should renounce it voluntarily. This ideal however is rarely realized, and therefore I have not the heart to press it upon a young girl like X. She is a thoughtful girl and must surely be observing rules for which she thinks she is qualified.

'I prayed for Manilal's recovery. However it was a sign not of wisdom but of a father's love. There is really only one prayer that we may offer: "Thy will be done." Some one will ask where is the sense in offering such a prayer. The answer is: Prayer should not be understood in a gross sense. We are aware of the presence of God in our heart, and in order to shake off attachment, we for the moment think of God as different from ourselves and pray to Him. That is to say, we do not wish to go where our wayward will may lead us but where the Lord takes us. We do not know whether it is good to live or to die. Therefore we should not take delight in living, nor should we tremble at the thought of death. We should be equiminded towards both. This is the ideal. It may be

long before we reach it, and only a few of us can attain it. Even then we must keep it constantly in view, and the more difficult it seems of attainment, the greater should be the effort we put forth.

'Man's span of life may be a hundred and even more. But no matter how long he lives, his life is hardly one millionth part of a drop in the ocean that is eternity. All attachment for it and all calculations about it hardly make sense. Our calculations are bound to be uncertain. We can only make a guess at the maximum years a man may live. For the rest we see even healthy children succumb to death. And we cannot assert that a man given to the pleasures of life will not live long. All we can say is that a man who lives a life of simplicity and chastity will probably live long. But to exercise self-control in order to live long is like a mountain in labour bringing forth a mouse. The passions must be subdued in order that we may attain self-realization. If in the course of that discipline we find that life is being shortened instead of being lengthened, we need not bother about it. Health and longevity are a very insignificant fruit of self-control.'

MAY 20, 1932

Bapu wrote a long letter to Prabhudas who is in Belgam prison. He expressed his satisfaction with the progress he has made during the last fortnight in getting a mastery over the Magan spinning-wheel, and congratulated Prabhudas upon his inventiveness. He considered himself a happy man as he had been able to gratify his desire to work upon that wheel thanks to disability in old age. If Prabhudas saw with his own eyes the interest Bapu was taking in his invention, he would be delighted and add one or two pounds to his weight. Bapu had formed a resolution of working upon the Magan wheel when his arms were all right, but he could carry it out only now when he was under compulsion to give it a trial. He was reduced to such a plight that he must spin on that wheel or not at all. Necessity is the mother of invention. He

would therefore try to increase his speed in spinning in a variety of ways. Meanwhile if Prabhudas was released he should interview Bapu and teach him something new.

Prabhudas had asked Bapu the meaning of मत्पर: (Gita XVIII. 57). He had also placed his other difficulties before him. If God is truth, what should be man's symbol for it? He may recite the name of Rama, but then who is Rama? To him Bapu replied:

'मत्पर: (one to whom I am the one thing needful) means सत्यपरायण: (one to whom truth is the one thing needful). In his line

चरणपद्मे मम चित्त निष्पन्दित करो हे।

the Poet has invested truth with a body by referring to the lotus-like feet of Satyanarayan (God as truth). Truth has no form. Therefore every one will form such an idea or image of truth as appeals to him, and there will be as many images of truth as there are men. These will all be true as long as they last. For they enable a man to obtain everything he wants. As a matter of fact names such as Brahma, Vishnu, Ishvara, Bhagavan are either meaningless or at least not significant enough, whereas Satya (Truth) is the perfect name for God. If some one says he will die for God's sake, he cannot make plain to others what he means, and people who hear him say so will hardly understand it. On the other hand one who says he will die for truth knows what he means, and his words will be generally understood by those who hear him.

'You ask what is Rama. I may explain to you the meaning of that word, but then your repetition of that name would be nearly fruitless. But if you understand that Rama is He whom you intend to worship and then repeat His name, it will serve the purpose of the horn of plenty for you. You may repeat it like a parrot, but still it will be helpful because your repetition unlike the parrot's is backed by a purpose. Thus you do not need any symbol, and Tulsidas holds that the name of Rama is more powerful than Rama himself and suggests that there is no relation

between the word Rama and its meaning. The meaning will be filled in later by the devotee in accordance with the nature of his devotion. That is the beauty of this repetition (*japa*). Otherwise it would be impossible to prove that it will make a new man even of a simpleton. The devotee must fulfil only a single condition. The name should not be repeated for show or with a view to deceiving others, but with determination and faith. If a man perseveres with such repetition, I have not the shadow of a doubt that it will be for him a universal provider. Every one who has the requisite patience can realize this in his own case. For days and sometimes for years, the mind wanders and becomes restless, the body craves for sleep when one is engaged in repeating the name. Indeed even still more painful symptoms intervene. Still if the seeker perseveres with the repetition, it is bound to bear fruit. Spinning is a gross material accomplishment and yet it can be acquired only after our patience is sorely tried. Things more difficult than spinning demand a greater effort on our part. Therefore he who is out to attain the Supreme must undergo the necessary discipline for a long, long time and never be downhearted. I think I have now answered all your questions. If you have faith, repeat the name at all times, when you sit or stand or lie down, eat or drink. There is no reason to despair if the whole of your life-time is spent while you are at it. If you try it, you will have peace of mind in an increasing measure from day to day.'

I read to Bapu an article in the *New Statesman* of May 7, reproduced in the *Leader*. He remarked it was excellent.

If almonds cost over two rupees a pound, Bapu had thought of dropping them out of his menu, but on inquiry we found that they cost only 12 annas. The Sardar said the low price was so tempting that he thought they too should go in for almonds. Bapu said they were something beyond his (the Sardar's) reach. I suggested that we might take almonds if we gave up *milk* and *ghi*. The Sardar said they would give up cow's milk and *ghi* like Bapu.

MAY 21, 1932

The riots in Bombay are subsiding. On Saturday none was murdered, but about 25 persons were wounded. Dahyabhai and Manibehn interviewed the Sardar and said that in Bombay too Government had asked the people to seek Congress protection. Thus Bapu's intuition was correct.

In the evening we talked about the communal riots. The Sardar said, 'It is not a straight fight. If people are stabbed in the back and women are injured in the chawls by Muslims disguised as Khadi-clad Congressmen, what is to be done and what is the advice to be given to the citizens of Bombay ? ' Bapu replied he had pointed out the way : Fight it out or die without offering resistance. The Sardar asked how Hindus could fight it out, as they were not capable of doing what the Muslims did. Bapu remarked that was not so. All were capable of doing what they did, as for instance in Kanpur. 'Dr. Munje says Hindus should fight Muslims with the same weapons and the same methods. I think he is a brave man ; he speaks out his mind without any reservations. But I hold that Hindus are incapable of fighting the Muslims with the latter's weapons, as it is not in their nature. Therefore we must die unresistingly. The *ahimsa* observed at present is practical *ahimsa* and cannot make any impression on Muslims.' I said, 'If big parties face and fight each other, we can imagine one party to be ready to follow the advice of dying without offering resistance. But what can be done about stray cases of murder and loot ? ' Bapu replied, 'My advice would be the same even in such cases. But it is no good as no one is ready to accept it. This is a pointer to my own weakness. My *ahimsa* is not as it should be spontaneously effective. And yet it is a pity that people seek my advice. The poor things are on the horns of a dilemma. They would be able to find a way out for themselves if I were not alive. My presence is an obstruction for them, and such being the case, fasting is my only resource. If I had been a free man and in Bombay, I might have already employed that weapon.' I remarked that it was then a good thing that

Bapu was behind prison bars. Bapu agreed and observed that if they had been free men, they would have been unable to do anything useful. I said I would not wonder if there was now open civil war. Bapu reminded us that civil war had actually broken out before as for instance at Kohat. And in England he had pocketed any number of insults from the Muslims and drunk many a bitter draught uncomplainingly.

To Raihana Tyebji Bapu wrote a letter, hoping all members of the family had derived benefit from the visit to Abu. Did Abbas Saheb read anything? Abu must have given him back the vigour of youth. But the madness in Bombay had damped their spirits. Bapu could not for the life of him understand, how one man could fight another in the sacred name of religion. But he must restrain his mind as well as pen. It was poison that he had been drinking now from day to day.

MAY 22, 1932

Bapu wrote letters all day long. He made a reed pen and began to write the Urdu copy-book and letters as well with it. He asked me, 'In 1917-18 we wrote with a reed pen. Have you any idea why we gave it up?' I reminded him how he had thrown the steel pen holder out of a railway carriage window and written all letters to Lord Chelmsford with a reed pen. But later on there was a lot of travelling, and everything must be written in ink. Therefore the fountain pen came in. The first pen was given to Bapu by Satishbabu.

Similarly Bapu used to write the *tithi* (day of the Hindu lunar month) only and was annoyed if he saw anybody using the date according to the Western calendar. But now he has given up *tithis* and says, 'The European calendar has been accepted by the whole world, and we cannot have any hatred for it.'

Arun, Hemaprabhadevi's son is very ill, but does not take rest as he should. To him therefore Bapu wrote:

'Mother tells me you are ailing and that you insist on reading and working. Will you not give yourself rest

and the body a chance of recovery? Though death and life are the faces of the same coin and though we should die as cheerfully as we live, it is necessary while there is life to give the body its due. It is a charge given to us by God. And we have to take all reasonable care about it. Do write to me if you can. God bless you.'

Here is part of his letter to Esther :

'I understand all you are doing. Only you must not work yourself into anxiety. If we simply make ourselves instruments of His will, we should never have an anxious moment.

'Yes, there is no calm without a storm. There is no peace without strife. Strife is inherent in peace. Life is a perpetual struggle against strife whether within or without. Hence the necessity of realizing peace in the midst of strife.'

To her two little daughters Bapu wrote :

'You have sent me a sweet letter. I see you are making friends with birds. We have made friends with a cat and her kittens. I call her sister. It is delightful to watch her love for the young ones. She teaches them all sorts of things by simply doing them. God bless you.

With kisses, Bapu.'

Last but not the least is part of a letter to Dr P. C. Roy :

'The work you are doing is difficult, but it is the only way to help our people. There is no substitute for *charkha* (the spinning wheel).

'It is nonsense for you to talk of old age so long as you outrun young men in the race for service and in the midst of anxious times fill rooms with your laughter and inspire youth with hope when they are on the brink of despair.'

May 23, 1932

Bapu is making fresh discoveries while he is reading the Urdu readers. One of these carries a lesson on Muhammad Begada the Gujarat prince in which full details are given as regards his breakfast as if it was something to be proud of : 150 bananas, a cup of honey, a cup of *ghi*

and so on. On the other hand Shivaji has been treated with scant courtesy, being described as an uneducated, uncultured rustic and robber.

Hanumanprasad Poddar had asked Bapu if there had occurred any particular incidents in his life, which strengthened his faith in God. To him Bapu replied: 'I do not remember any such events. I was at first lacking in faith, but, I acquired it by contemplation and study of religions. It grows stronger from day to day, as I have an increasing realization of the fact that God abides with me in my heart. But why this question? If you intend to publish the answer in *Kalyan* in the future, it will serve no useful purpose. If the question is asked for your own guidance, let me tell you that one man's experience in this line is of no use to another. Faith can be strengthened only by constant effort informed by faith.'

MAY 24, 1932

A girl asked Bapu if he believed in marriage between followers of different faiths as he was in favour of inter-caste marriages. To her Bapu wrote:

'Children should be married only when they have grown up. The parties to a marriage should arrange it themselves and obtain their parents' consent. Thus there is no artificial restriction. But I look upon marriage between two persons who follow different faiths as a risky experiment. For if they believe in and practise their faiths, difficulties are likely to crop up. Thus I think that that Bhatia girl has incurred great risk, but her marriage is not irreligious in my opinion. She and her Muslim husband may have pure love for each other, and each may be able to follow his or her own faith. Again I would not oppose such a marriage if the parties to it have the same ideas about food. But I would not approve of it as I approve of inter-caste marriage. Nor would I agitate against it. It is something that everyone should think out for oneself. The same law cannot be laid down for all.'

In the course of a letter to Mulchand Parekh Bapu wrote:

'Not a single school for Harijan children should be closed so long as the members of the Samiti are alive. These should sell their houses and themselves, and keep the school going. Then only will they have justified their existence. Therefore never say die, be a robust optimist. When you are ready to sell yourself, people will buy you for the amount budgeted by the Samiti. Do you remember Bhoja Bhagat's line,

* भक्ति शीवतणुं साटुं, आगळ वसमी छे वाटुं । ?'

In London we used duly to receive letters addressed to Gandhi, London. One of them had as address a picture of Bapu cut out from a newpaper with London written below. Here in India we got back a letter which was sent to Austria but whose addressee could not be traced. It was signed simply 'Bapu.' The Indian Dead Letter Office sent it back with the address as follows: 'Shri Bapu, that is Mahatma Gandhi, Yeravda Central Prison.' Even in that place there was some one who knew and revered Bapu.

May 25, 1932

We had complained that our letters did not sometimes reach the addressees. In answer to the complaint the Governor-in-Council wrote that inquiries were being made and the Police Commissioner had been directed to take suitable action.

Darbari Sadhu has given up the *kasti* and *sadra* (sacred belt and shirt usually worn by Parsis) and thus caused pain to his relations. To them Bapu wrote:

'There was no need to give these up, and I hope he will wear them again when he returns home. There is nothing superstitious or sinful about it. Wearing them does nobody any harm; on the other hand discarding them shocks Parsis. A servant of the people has no business to administer needless shocks to them. This is a breach of *ahimsa*. It is enough that one does not attach undue importance to these things. I have asked Dahyabhai to

* 'The devotee should be willing to offer his head at all times. The path of devotion is not easy to tread.' *Ed.*

bring Parsi religious books for him. I read a translation of the Vendidad long ago and found it had much ethical content. Zoroastrianism being a very ancient faith, many parts of its scriptures are now no longer extant, and perhaps there is not much like the Upanishads in the parts available. Darbari should go through and ponder over them. Zend and Vedic Sanskrit are closely related to each other. Therefore if there is something lacking in the Parsi sacred books, there is nothing derogatory to Zoroastrianism in supplying it from the Vedas and the Upanishads. As a matter of fact, while we adhere to our own faith, we have every right to adopt acceptable features from any other faith. It is not only a right ; it is a duty we must discharge. It is fanaticism to imagine that you cannot accept anything from other faiths. Thank God we are all strangers to it.'

Bhuskute had asked how Bapu acted according to the dictates of the Inner Voice while he believed that Truth is God and there is no Creator. Bapu replied, 'The question betrays misunderstanding of my attitude. I say Truth is God. Therefore Truth is the Creator. But "Creator" here has not its usual meaning. Therefore Truth both is and is not the Creator. But this is only to chop logic. In these matters every one is free to believe what he thinks fit ; for no one has perfect knowledge of God and even if a man knows something of Him, he cannot explain it to others. It is indeed true that I do not trust my intellect in arriving at decisions, and stay my hand until I hear the Inner Voice. I do not know if this is a mysterious power. I have never thought it necessary to analyse it. I believe and know that this is something beyond the intellect, and that is enough for me. I cannot offer any further explanation as I simply do not know.'

Received a fine letter from Mirabehn. Parts of it throw light upon her temperament and (if I may so phrase it) change of heart :

'I had about 40 minutes with the Ramayan last night. I had only got half way through Griffith's full translation when I left jail. I want to read it faithfully from cover to

cover, so I am keeping it by me. It gives me extraordinary happiness and peace when I read it. It is something I cannot explain. And what joy it is to read the descriptions, — the forests, the hermits, the animals and birds, the peasants, the fields, the villages, the towns. Though four or five thousand years have gone by, it is all there still in the heart of this blessed land. Ever since we came back from Europe this time, I have been feeling with double force (if it were possible) the deep, peaceful, eternal joy of Hindu culture. And all the while it stirs in me a feeling of long past associations — it seems all something I have known and loved since time immemorial. Past births seem almost to stare me in the face sometimes. And you can imagine what the reading of the Ramayan means to me.

'I can fairly say that I felt more pleasure in giving up the pen this time, than I have ever felt in possessing one. If I look with envy on anyone it is not the man who has possessions, but the man who lives voluntarily and happily without any.'

Received a letter from Shri K. Natarajan :

'As for my paragraph about occult powers which you feel might have been stronger, it is curious but I seem to have utterly lost the taste for and the knack of strong writing particularly in criticizing persons. When I take my pen intending to hit hard, the picture of the other man stands before my eyes and seems to say : "You do not know what I have to say for myself. I too have ideals, however much they may be obscured by my conduct. Judge me as you would yourself." I avoid all adjectives of judgment as poison and try in all that I say to be completely objective. This has become a habit, and I do not doubt that in all circumstances it is a healthy one. As regards this particular matter, the thought that after all the man takes his life in his hands weights my judgment. As for the curious crowd, they, I suppose, find relief from the tyranny of daily circumstances in witnessing facts which show or seem to show that one man at least is able to rise above them.'

To him Bapu replied as follows:

'When I said that writing about the abuse of occult powers you might have been stronger, I used the adjective precisely in the same sense in which I should use it regarding admitted evils. I feel that whilst we should spare evil-doers, we dare not be sparing in our condemnation of evil. Perfect gentleness is not inconsistent with clearest possible denunciation of what one knows to be evil, so long as that knowledge persists; and there would need to be no cause for regret later if our knowledge of the past was found to be a great error of judgment. In our endeavour to approach absolute truth we shall always have to be content with relative truth from time to time, the relative at each stage being for us as good as the absolute. It can be easily demonstrated that there would be no progress if there was no such confidence in oneself. Of course our language would be one of caution and hesitation if we had any doubt about the correctness of our position. In the case in point, the motive of the exhibitor, no matter how excellent it may be, in my opinion would be no excuse for his exhibition, and the laziness of the spectators in not having thought out the consequences of their presence at such exhibitions is again no excuse for their presence. But I must not labour the point any further. I thought that as I could not endorse the position taken up by you in your letter, I should just place before you my argument for your consideration.'

While going through the Urdu readers Bapu observed: 'The author has done his worst to poison the ears of his readers. His books were sanctioned by the British Government before the days of Hindu-Muslim tension, and were read by Muslim young men of today in the impressionable days of childhood.'

About the English people he said, 'It is their national characteristic that they will never yield until they weaken, whether they are fighting among themselves or with others.'

Seeing the Sardar engaged in making envelopes and collecting various things, Bapu asked him what portfolio

should be reserved for him under Swaraj. The Sardar replied he would then take the beggar's bowl.

MAY 26, 1932

This morning Major Mehta visited our ward while Bapu was going for his bath. He asked Bapu if he used soap in bathing. 'No', replied Bapu. 'I use hot water; so I do not need soap.' The Major was visibly moved and said, 'Remarkable; remarkable. In central Spain there is a region where soap is unknown and we meet men and women with a real olive complexion. The skin cracks up on account of soap. We do however need soap to wash the hands.' He then asked Bapu if he had met Mussolini; was he not a remarkable personality? Bapu replied, 'Yes, but a cruel man. A regime based on such cruelty cannot last long.' The Major said Mussolini had saved Italy from ruin. Bapu replied no one could say how far that was true, but Mussolini had made himself responsible for terrible persecution. Prof. Salvemini had printed heaps of evidence to show that he had instigated murders of political opponents. The Major remarked that he was a beautiful personality all the same. 'Yes,' I put in, 'beautiful in the same sense that a tiger has a beautiful figure.' 'You are right,' said the Major. 'The more ferocious an animal, the more beautiful it looks.'

Bapu cut a piece of Khadi and made two towels for himself, each being a foot and a half long and a foot broad. While he was sewing the boarders of the towels, he dictated two letters. In one of them he explained to Titus the Ashram's attitude to beggars and the right method of conducting the Ashram dairy. The other was a letter of thanks to Chhakkaddas who sent excellent slivers and yarn spun by himself. Chhakkaddas is a cloth merchant, but he cards his own cotton, the slivers being then prepared by his daughters. He gets raw cotton ginned at his own place, spins for two hours and attends to his shop for seven hours. Families like his testify to the not so visible effect of the Khadi movement and exemplify unflinching faith as nothing else can.

M. Privat has replied to Hoare in the columns of *The Times*. Bapu remarked it was a dignified letter, and the fact that *The Times* had printed it showed that it did not like Sir Samuel's description.

Macdonald has born witness to the truth of what Bapu said yesterday. He says that to yield to Congress is to yield to violence and disorder, and they cannot accept a 'flabby interpretation of democracy.' Bapu observed that he had become a perfect Imperialist.

Bapu read Maunder's *Astronomy without a telescope* and said the author had given a very fine definition of science: 'Science is accurate measurement.' He applied this principle to spinning and other allied processes.

Writing to Chhaganlal Joshi yesterday Bapu said no one could trust a man who kept no observances.

Bapu laughed and said, 'If I come to terms with Government today, they will acclaim me as a real mahatma (great soul) who did not hesitate to confess his errors. But what of India? And men like Reynolds will go mad and many who now see that *ahimsa* is shining in all its glory will feel that it had been betrayed.'

MAY 27, 1932

The Sardar showed Bapu a picture of little boys of 8 to 10 years of age receiving military training in Mussolini's Italy and said when they grew up, they would help him to destroy the world. Bapu replied, 'You are right. I have seen all that with my own eyes. Fascist propaganda is being carried on even in England. There are some Fascists in Parliament and Winston Churchill is a great admirer of Mussolini's. Why, Baldwin told me there was no good in democracy. Macdonald's imperialism leads him to mock at democracy. It all shows which way the wind is blowing. This is what we are fighting against. What powerful opponents have we got to resist? But resist we must till the end of time.'

While Bapu was writing the Urdu copybook yesterday, the Sardar said, 'If your heart is troubled by unsatisfied desire as regards your Urdu studies, you will have to be

reborn as a *munshi* (Urdu teacher).' He then added 'If possible, you would hold your pen with your foot.' Bapu replied, 'Certainly. Even that will have to be tried if the hands stop working. When the Saurashtra outlaws Mulu Manek and Jodha Manek fell fighting against the British at Ghumli, they fired their rifles with their feet. Therefore we can certainly write or spin with the foot. But it is a pity that we cannot pull the sliver with it.'

While spinning today, Bapu found that the wheel would not move. As he is resting his hand, he moved it with the toe. He drew the thread with one hand, keeping one foot on the footrest and raising the other to turn the wheel. This made him look like Nataraja. The Sardar said he would take a snapshot of him if they had a camera.

A large number of shops were burnt down in Charsadda by, it is said, an accidental fire. Bapu said he had grown so suspicious of the British Government that he was afraid they had perhaps a hand in the disturbances there as in Bombay.

In a long letter to Devadas Gandhi Bapu paid a generous tribute to Narandas Gandhi the Ashram secretary, 'who by his firmness, patience, courage, renunciation and good judgment has relieved all my anxiety about the Ashram.' To Narandasbhai he wrote: 'In jail we are at rest, while you are performing *tapas* (self-suffering) internally and externally.'

As regards his Urdu studies, Bapu wrote to Devadas Gandhi:

'There are lessons on history in each reader. Some of them deal with the Prophet and his times, while others are concerned with Muslim rulers in India. The standpoint from which these are written should be understood by every one. I have an increasing realization of the importance of Urdu studies. By learning to write a language in its own script we can write letters in it. Moreover we thus also acquire greater mastery over the language, and are better able to decipher as well as understand letters received by us. I believe we should learn how to write Urdu letters to Muslim co-workers. If we are compelled to write

to them in English, Hindi can never take its legitimate place as the national language. That is why I think that ability to write in Urdu is an essential part of our mental equipment.'

He then referred to the circumstances in which he began to write Urdu letters to Raihana Tyebji and said, 'All these are non-violent and delicate means of establishing friendly relations with Musalmans.'

In the course of a letter to Shri Ghanshyamdas Birla Bapu wrote: 'I draw a distinction between optimism and credulity. Malaviyaji has both these qualities in his make-up. The optimist is he who continues to hope in the face of a multitude of disappointments. And he is credulous who reposes trust in the sweet words of anybody whom he happens to meet. This credulity is not a desirable quality. Malaviyaji is a great man and so his credulity has not done him harm. But we must beware of imitating him in this respect. Optimism depends upon the inner voice while credulity builds its castles on outward circumstances as the basis.'

Birlaji had asked Bapu his opinion whether he or Malaviyaji should go to England. Bapu replied that he had no right to express an opinion in the matter, but his general views were well known to all.

MAY 28, 1932

Bapu read Brailsford's article on Sankey and said, 'I see more and more clearly everyday that it was quite necessary to go to England. If we had not gone, these people would not have understood us and our case so perfectly. It is not a small thing that so many men are working for us without any thought of self.'

Verrier Elwin sent two beautiful extracts from Plotinus in his letter:

"I have been meditating on the writings of Plotinus so like the Gita in his stress on the life of beauty which men live when they have climbed above the life of senses. He speaks of the eternal beauty which makes its lovers beautiful so that they too are worthy of love. 'It is for

this that souls must run their ultimate and greatest race; the prize of all their striving is this, that they be not without portion in the Supreme Spectacle. Blessed is he whose eyes have seen the blessed Vision, but he who fails in this has verily failed. For a man may fail to win fair bodies, may fail to win power or office or a king's throne, and yet it is not failure. Failure it is, although he should gain all else if a man fail of this — for whose winning he ought to reject thrones and principalities of all the earth and sea and sky, if by leaving these behind him and looking beyond them his vision might be converted thither and he should see.'

"Plotinus gives this account of the ascetic process:

'Withdraw in thyself and see thyself. And if as yet thou see no beauty in thyself, then do as does the maker of an image which shall at last be fair; as he strikes off a part and a part planes away, as he makes this smooth and releases that, until he has revealed upon the image its face of beauty. So do thou strip away all excess and make straight all crookedness. Whatsoever is yet prisoned in darkness, labour to release it that it may be bright, and cease not from the fashioning of thine own image, until that day when the glory of virtue as of a god shall flame upon thee and thine eyes shall behold serenity established on her stainless pedestal.'"

To him Bapu wrote:

'The passages are very striking and very beautiful, but the first is good for all times, while the second may not appeal to the modern mind. I do not find it difficult to understand.'

I asked Bapu why he thought so about the second extract. He replied, 'It may give rise to hypocrisy. Who can be or ought to be satisfied with his own progress? Who could imagine that he himself shone with divine glory? And yet some who read this might really be misled into thinking so highly of themselves. Nathuram Sharma suffered from this weakness. All at once a person rushes to the conclusion that he had mastered animal passion

today and tomorrow will witness his conquest of anger:

* असौ मया हतः शत्रुर्हनिष्ये चापरानपि ।'

I said the author of the Gita would never have imagined Bapu would quote his verse with such deadly effect. He replied, 'No, but I am right. Or the analogy of a sculptor fashioning an image fails in its application. The soul cannot be carved out like that. But let us understand the implications of this advice. The self should be examined and the distance still to be covered measured from day to day.'

MAY 29, 1932

Read a news-item yesterday that Government have burnt spinning wheels and looms which were part of the goods of the Ashram at Vedchhi confiscated by them. The hut at Karadi was said to have been burnt by accident. But as these wheels were in the actual possession of Government, there need not be any hesitation in asserting that they were burnt deliberately.

Bapu began once again to write letters with the right hand. The left hand was overstrained with the result that it too began to give trouble like the right hand. Therefore the doctor has advised him now to use the right hand for a little while. Referring to this Bapu wrote in a postscript to a letter addressed to Goshibehn: 'It is now the left hand I may not use. Old age knocking vigorously?' The letter itself is written in a lighter vein:

"Your welcome letter. I don't expect Jalbhai to trouble to write to me. I expect you the nurses to do that work. A patient has to eat, sleep, complain and bully. He is an angel when he omits to do the two last things. I hope the crutches will go.

"I am no good at choosing books for others, even you, though so near to me. The book of life is really the book to read and that you are doing more or less. The other is amusement for those who have no service. One would think that here at least one would have plenty of time to read.

* Gita XVI. 14: 'That enemy I have killed and I will kill others too.' *Ed.*

Well, spinning and preparatory studies leave little time for reading for amusement. But I must stop this lecturing.

"Are you keeping well? Has Nargisbehn lost her headache? The Government's reply regarding her is that I am not to see her. Evidently they think that she is taking an active part in politics or that she suffers from contamination."

Letters written by Bapu on Monday, the day of silence, are generally such as are important or are such as should be written by him himself for personal reasons. He enjoyed close relations with Dr Pranjivandas Mehta. He is therefore taking more than paternal interest in his son to whom he wrote: 'Received the letter from Venice. Let me know how you passed your time on the steamer, what things you observed during the voyage and how you spent your money, so that I may have an idea of your powers of description and of what you regard as simplicity. Take walks for exercise and make yourself physically fit. Do not get others to do what you can do for yourself. Do not use a conveyance in order to reach a place if you can negotiate the distance on foot. Fight against cold by exercise, not by sitting near the fireplace......

'Write to your father regularly. Send him a statement of accounts from time to time. Remember that parents can never have enough of letters from their children. They are interested in the minutest details about them. Fulfil your father's expectations about you.'

Daudbhai was in the Ashram for some time. In his welfare also Bapu takes the same kind of interest: 'You did well to write to me. Fight like a lion against wicked thoughts and inclinations. It is our duty to fight, but victory is in God's hands. We must rest content with having striven sincerely. You must have good companions. A good book is the best of companions, especially in a city like Bombay. And to see Nurbanu is a liberal education in my opinion for she is a very good and holy woman.'

Writing to Lakshmi as Devadas' fiancee Bapu described the holy death of Gangadevi as having sanctified the Ashram.

This is from a letter to Esther:

"Feeling is of the heart. It may lead us astray unless we would keep the heart pure. It is like keeping house and everything in it clean. The heart is the source from which knowledge of God springs. If the source is contaminated, every other remedy is useless. And if its purity is assured, nothing else is needed."

MAY 30, 1932

Bapu wrote many more letters with the right hand, as well as the weekly article to the Ashram on 'the lessons to be learnt from deaths.' He also dictated some letters. S. is in the habit of framing imaginary problems and seeking solutions from Bapu. As Bapu has a tenderness for him he replies to his letters at length. He now raised the question of conception resulting from rape and of the suicide of molested women and wrote he was thinking of publishing Bapu's answer. To him Bapu wrote: 'I hold and doctors agree with me that a woman can never be raped against her will. As she is not ready to die in order to defend her honour, she ultimately yields to the wrongdoer. But one who is absolutely free from the fear of death will die before being outraged. This is easy to write but to practise it is hard indeed. Therefore when a woman yields to a wrong-doer unwillingly, we would do well to hold that she has been raped. If she becomes pregnant in consequence, she will not resort to abortion. The woman who is subjected to such outrage is free from blame and is to be pitied. If however she wants to conceal the fact of her having been outraged against her wishes, who can say whether she has or has not the right to practise abortion? A frightened woman will be inclined to think that she has this right although in fact she has not, and will act as she pleases. After an outrage a woman has no right to commit suicide, and no need either.

'My replies to your letters, having been written from jail, must not be published. I write from here a number of letters, and if they are published from time to time, it would not do me any credit. Government might perhaps put up

with the publication, but a Satyagrahi cannot take such liberties. This is one of the restraints which he imposes upon himself of his own accord. The world is not impatient to hear or to adopt my views. Even if it is, it has to exercise patience at present. As a matter of fact I do not value my views so highly as that. It cannot be said that I may not find it necessary tomorrow to modify the view that I hold today in every case. There is no objection if I send people like you a personal reply. For I take it that you would bear my temperament and my imperfections in mind and thus take my views for what they are worth.

'As regards your questions, some of them should not be asked at all. The seeker must not try to obtain abstract decisions from any one in whom he reposes faith, nor expect him to solve imaginary difficulties. A question is certainly in order when it has something to do with a step one is going to take. If it is connected with an event that has occurred, the event must be fully described, and must not be made the basis of a general question, because generalization necessitates the omission of one important detail or another. Thus there is risk in applying the answer to a general question to actual events.'

To some one who asked Bapu to give up politics and to preach the truths common to Islam, Christianity and Buddhism, Bapu wrote:

"In my opinion unity will come not by mechanical means but by change of heart and attitude on the part of the leaders of public opinion. I do not conceive religion as one of the many activities of mankind. The same activity may be governed by the spirit either of religion or of irreligion. There is no such thing for me therefore as leaving politics for religion. For me every, the tiniest, activity is governed by what I consider to be my religion."

Miss Lumsden wrote to Bapu from Canada reporting a conversation she had with Sir Henry Lawrence who had stayed with her:

"A strange story of how he met you in Poona and how you had rooms looking out on a lovely orchard and you were then reading Gibbon's *Decline and Fall of*

the Roman Empire and were working at your spinning wheel ; in fact he made out that you were very happy and comfortable. I said it sounded like a fairy tale and was too good to be true. Sir Henry asked me to write and ask you to confirm the account of your first meeting some 10 years ago unless, said Sir H. Lawrence, 'Mr Gandhi's memory is failing, for you must remember that he is 62.' I am sure your memory is not failing ; that is why I am writing to ask you whether in this matter Sir Henry is a comparatively truthful man."

Bapu dictated a reply to her letter. I remarked that on reading the reply one might receive the impression that Bapu was throwing doubts upon Sir Henry's truthfulness. He replied that the draft must be changed if such was the case, for he had no intention of calling his truthfulness into question. The Sardar suspected that Sir Henry was perhaps carrying on propaganda ; he therefore suggested that in the reply we must say that there are no orchards here but only prisoners. The failing memory must be Sir Henry's, not Bapu's, for he is older than Bapu. I said that such a reply might well be given by Bernard Shaw, but there should be nothing like cleverness about our reply. At this the Sardar was rather angry. I said that we have only to consider what would be a proper reply for Bapu to make. He then dictated a second draft :

"I thank you for your letter. I well remember the visit of Sir Henry to this prison in 1922 or '23. He is right in his impression that I then passed my time principally in reading the *Decline and Fall of the Roman Empire* and spinning at the wheel. It is also true that he found me quite happy. But there was no lovely orchard then, nor is there now. There were then, as there are now, some tall trees about. The rooms are bare and barred cells of an ordinary Indian prison. As cells they are well lighted and well ventilated. So far therefore as surroundings are concerned, there is no question of my memory betraying me, for at the time of writing I am exactly in the same surroundings as when Sir Henry saw me. If therefore his description of them gave you the impression of a fairy tale,

it was surely erroneous. Happiness after all is a mental state, and for myself being used now for more than a generation to a hard life I have learnt to detach my happiness from my surroundings."

To Bhau a co-worker of Vinoba's Bapu wrote :

'To meditate on the image of living people is not to be commended. We must attribute perfection to the object of our meditation, but no living person can be perfect. The illustrations in the Ramayana are no good. But why should you need an image at all ? God has no shape and no attributes. Why not meditate on Him ? If that is impossible, let us meditate on *Omkar* (the syllable Om), or on a figure imagined by ourselves. Why not meditate on mother Gita ? She is compared to the cow of plenty (*kamadhenu*). Let us meditate on this cow. To meditate on the figure of living persons is likely to do harm and must therefore be avoided.'

To an Ashram child who asked Bapu for a description of England he wrote : 'London is a very big city. It has many chimneys which blacken everything. Nothing there will stay white. The sun is rarely visible. But the English people are more industrious than we are. And roads in England are very clean.'

Catherine Mayo has reappeared in 1932 as Patricia Kendall who tells Londoners that

"Gandhi is a waning star. Policy of Lord Willingdon is being justified. Gandhiji's followers disillusioned. Visited jails and found standard of living in prisons far higher than that of natives outside ; and Lady Willingdon is extremely popular and princes are popular too."

This appeared in *The Hindu* but not in *The Times of India*. Bapu remarked '*The Times of India* is perhaps ashamed of publishing such trash.' The Sardar could not see why it should be ashamed, seeing that it too was there for carrying on such propaganda. 'Yes,' replied Bapu. 'Still it is clear that Britishers would be ashamed of publishing such things in India. Patricia seems to be an agent of Lord Willingdon.'

Pained to read the Government communique on the attacks against women in Banaras, in which there are aspersions cast on Panditji. 'Women were molested, but the women whom Panditji describes as respectable are concubines, destitute widows or hired volunteers. Some one has let him badly down. Will he reply and admit his error ?'

MAY 31, 1932

The Bombay riots still continue with fatal and cowardly attacks. Bapu's comment was: 'I am pleased, as it were, to hear the most shocking things, for all the refuse is coming to the surface. It looks as if someone is busy with a big sieve, sifting all manner of things.'

Some fool has written, asking how we are to stop the killing of numerous ants which are crushed under our feet as we go along. The Sardar was quick with a suggestion: 'Ask him to walk with his feet on his head.'

The Collector came on his usual visit to jail. With the exception of Mr E. W. Perry I have not met any other officer so courteous as he is. He first saw to it that Bapu and the Sardar were seated, and then took his seat. A cat feeding its kittens had installed herself on a chair; so he asked me to sit on the stool opposite. The jailer was still without a seat; the Collector therefore called for one more chair, which he almost compelled the jailer to occupy. He shook hands with us three both when he came and when he went away. He said to Bapu, 'What news shall I give you? The riots are scarcely worthy of being brought to your notice, disgraceful as they are. There was a slight incident even in Poona. A Hindu was foolish enough to paint a Muslim's grave in order to convert it into a Hindu *samadhi*. But I suppressed the riot at once, and took care that the bad news did not spread. The Bombay affair is sickening. Let us hope it will come to an end and not lead to repercussions elsewhere. Can I do anything for you?' 'No, thanks,' replied Bapu. 'Can I really do nothing for you? All right then; good morning.' There was a wonderful gentleness written on Mr Maclochlan's face.

Bapu leans on a *patlo* (wooden board) kept at the back. Very often he keeps it close to the wall and not at an angle. I remarked that if it was kept at an angle, it would not fall down from time to time and would be more comfortable. 'Perhaps,' Bapu replied. 'But the proper thing to do is to keep it straight, so that the backbone and waist remain straight in their turn and do not bend. It is a general principle that if you keep one thing straight, it will tend to straighten everything else, and crookedness at one point will make for crookedness at many other points.'

JUNE 1, 1932

Read Romain Rolland's life of Ramakrishna Paramahansa. He writes with a rich imagination and deep feeling. While living in a Swiss village, he gets English books translated into the French, is at work for two years and then brings out a book which puts Indian handlers of the theme to shame. He ably traces the history of the religious revival from Ramamohan Roy to Ramakrishna and Vivekananda. Page after page bears witness to his admiration for India, the attraction for him of the Indian method of the quest and the depth of his understanding of the intricacies of Indian philosophy. Ramakrishna's relations with Totapuri and Keshavachandra Sen have been adequately dealt with.

I recommended the book to the Sardar and said, 'If for nothing else, you should read it because you will find in him a kindred soul at least so far as his "ironic good sense" is concerned. For instance when the Brahmos sang a hymn in which they claimed to remember God all day and night long, Ramakrishna remarked, "Why do you tell an untruth? Why not say that you worship God twice a day? Why try to deceive Him?" Again the Brahmos claim to have rejected idol worship; Ramakrishna therefore said, "You enumerate the attributes of God. But why have recourse to statistics? Do you ever meet a son who is telling his father that he has so many houses, orchards and horses?"' These criticisms are in the Sardaresque style.

As an illustration of the spiritual and physical hypersensitivity of Ramakrishna, Rolland refers to the facts that even while he was asleep, the touch of gold affected him like fire, and that he felt the touch of a wicked man as if he had touched a snake and roared with displeasure. I asked Bapu about this, and he replied, 'That is quite in the nature of things, but it does not indicate the height of purity as you are inclined to think. You can cultivate your contempt for something to such an extent that a touch of it even in sleep will give you a shock. And as regards Ramakrishna's horror at the touch of a wicked man, it is contrary to the nature of a man who is to see the divine in every human face. He could not have entertained hatred even for the wicked. The thing is that we must realize the real greatness of such great men. We may not react to them exactly as others did. But we must understand and treasure the fact that they have led many people to the right path.'

As we were talking about Sister Nivedita, Bapu said, 'I can never forget that when I first met her, she gave expression to a deep hatred and contempt for English people. I had felt that she was living in a grand style, but many others have testified that she lived in the most squalid of scavengers' quraters and I accept their testimony. We met once again at Padshah's house. His mother made a remark which I still remember. She said, "Tell her that having abandoned her own faith she is not in a position to expound my faith to me."'

JUNE 2, 1932

Drew Bapu's attention to the conflict between Gita VII : 24,

अव्यक्तं व्यक्तिमापन्नं मन्यन्ते मामबुद्धयः ।

'The ignorant think of Me, the unmanifest as having manifestation' (Radhakrishnan's translation) and XII : 5,

क्लेशोऽधिकतरस्तेषामव्यक्तासक्तचेतसाम् ।

'Men who are devoted to the Unmanifest have a more difficult path to tread' and so on, verses which

recommend the worship of the Manifest. He said, 'Such inconsistency is often met with in the Gita. The conflict can be resolved by saying that one thing is emphasized at one time and a second thing at another. Then again the twelfth chapter does not set its face against the worship of the Unmanifest but only refers to the hardness of the task in that case.' 'But in your letter to Bhau,' I said, 'you asked him to worship the Unmanifest in place of the Manifest.' 'Yes,' replied Bapu. 'I did so as it is improper that one should meditate over a living person who can never be perfect. If image worship is referred to in the Gita, the images must be those of the Incarnations of God.' 'Who then are the Incarnations ? ' I asked. 'We do not have any real images of them,' replied Bapu. 'That is why I say that we may worship the Incarnations of our imagination. I will not go so far as to say that one may not meditate on say a picture of Ravivarma. All depends upon the mental attitude of the worshipper.'

We had a talk about Shakti-worship yesterday, when Bapu said, 'When Indulal Yajnik was here, he gave me one of Woodroffe's books to read. Part of it was so bad and obscene that I could not bring myself to read it. When I came to the chapter dealing with dances, I was so deeply shocked that I left the rest of the volume unread. I reacted to Gitagovinda in exactly the same manner. As I read the English translation and the notes, I came to the conclusion that it was no use trying to read the book.'

Laski's article in *Yale Review* contains a thorough exposure of the perversity of the Muslim invitees to the Round Table Conference. Upon its being read out to Bapu, he said, 'Laski has realized that Sankey is unreliable. I am glad of it, as it was I who opened his and other people's eyes to the reality. I have never concealed my opinion of Sankey.'

I remarked that it was now time for us to receive Sankey's reply to Bapu's letter. This was a surprise for him, as he had clean forgotten that he had written to Sankey. He had a faint recollection of this letter after I referred to some of its contents.

As we were going to bed, I said, 'Bapu, you remember little things so perfectly that it often astonishes me. Therefore it is curious how you have managed to forget the letter to Sankey which was drafted after considerable thought and discussion. Only today you remembered that the letter to Daud was enclosed in X's envelope. To think that you remember such minute things and forget the letter to Sankey altogether!'

Bapu replied: 'Yes, you are right. The reason is that I valued these little letters very highly. I never forget anything which is related to any one's welfare.'

I said: 'Some one has defined memory as the power to remember everything that is necessary to remember and to forget all the rest.'

Bapu replied: 'That is it. I never attached much importance to the letter I addressed to Sankey. It was written and forgotten. But I remembered the letter to Daud as it dealt with a man's spiritual welfare. The fact is that big things do not appear so big to me as small things do at times. Big movements have not seemed so to me. None of the tasks I have performed since the beginning in Champaran were of my seeking; they fell into my lap, as it were. It has been so all along. It is God who has been my constant support.'

JUNE 3, 1932

Parchure Shastri has been kept in the lepers' ward here. Bapu tried to see him but in vain, as lepers are not permitted to meet other prisoners. He was however thinking of the Shastri all along. He therefore wrote a letter to him, inquiring after his health. The Shastri's reply to this is fit to be treasured:

...चरणकमलाभ्यां नतिततयोः विलसन्तु ।

'I was highly delighted to have your kind letter, which I look upon as a gift from Heaven. The disease has not still attacked the limbs. My faith in Yoga practices and suitable diet being helpful in effecting a cure increases from day to day.......

'I pass my time with pleasure in reading the Gita, the Upanishads etc., Yoga exercises, meditation, worship and spinning 500 yards of yarn a day. The only thing I worry about is the constant supply of slivers, as my wife is bed-ridden and therefore unable to replace the few slivers now left with me. Then again there is the difficulty in getting books, for we lepers are not allowed to take out books from the jail library, perhaps for fear of the infection spreading to healthy prisoners.

'In my opinion a Satyagrahi and a *mumukshu* (aspirant after salvation) have to acquire the same qualifications, such as *titiksha* (endurance of pain) for instance :

सहनं सर्वदु:खानाम् अप्रतिकारपूर्वकम् ।
चिन्ताविलापरहितं सा तितिक्षा निगद्यते ॥

Sacrifice (*yajna*) is impossible without this power of endurance. I am in a position to offer sacrifice either by cleaning sanitary conveniences or by spinning. Life for man is a burdensome and painful thing. Is a man entitled to cast it off in terms of the maxim

अप्रतिसमाधेयव्याधीनां जलादिप्रवेशेन प्राणत्याग: ।

when disease overpowers him so as to render him unfit for service, or should he even then continue to bear his cross ?'

Bapu made the substance of this letter his text for the weekly article for the Ashram and replied to the Shastri as follows :

'We were all delighted to have your letter. It is gratifying to observe that you bear your cross in a cheerful spirit. Nothing less was expected of you.

'Who looks after your ailing wife ? I send you a packet of slivers, made here in jail by Mahadev. We always have some to spare ; therefore do not hesitate to ask for them. Please send me a list of the books you want ; I will try to get them for you.

'Where does the Sanskrit maxim you have quoted occur ? My opinion on that point is as follows. A man who is suffering from an incurable disease and is living thanks to service rendered to him by others without himself doing anything useful in return has the right to end his

life. To fast unto death would be much better for him than to drown himself, for it tests his firmness and leaves room for him to change his mind. *Locus penitentiae* is essential. But so long as the man can render some service or other, it would be improper for him to end his life. Physical acts are a big and essential part of sacrifice. If however a man is incapable of doing anything with his body, mental activity may not be quite infructuous as sacrifice. We can serve even by pure and holy thought, and by good advice given to others. Thinking on the part of a holy man is action capable of producing great results.'

After writing this letter Bapu fell into a reverie for a couple of minutes and then asked: 'How is it that a man like the Shastri is afflicted by such disease?'

A summary of the report of the Lothian Committee appeared in the papers today. After listening to the substance of its recommendations, Bapu observed: 'The Committee has done well in so far as it has come forward with a definition of untouchability and calculated the number of "untouchables" so called at three crores and a half instead of the usual seven crores. For this Lothian is perhaps entitled to credit. Thanks to this definition Hindus, if they wish, can incorporate "untouchables" into Hindu society in one moment and at a stroke satisfy all the demands ostensibly made on their behalf.'

June 4, 1932

The definition of untouchability and arriving at the real number of untouchables are due not to Lothian but to Tambe and Chintamani. I read to Bapu the part of their minute of dissent dealing with 'untouchables.' He then remarked: 'It is a fine thing indeed. If special electorates are created for the untouchables, it will be a piece of rascality. One can understand an individual becoming selfish; but at present an attempt is being made to strike a whole nation blind with selfishness. Villiers in England talked of an unholy pact between the English and the Musalmans of India, which, as we have heard, was in evidence at Bombay and Chittagong.'

Letters from women satyagrahi prisoners, Uma Kundapur among them who wrote : 'I am sorry to have to leave 196 companions drawn from different provinces of India and presenting a cross-section of it. The happy days passed in their company are never to be forgotten. And upon release I will miss your letters too.'

A letter from Jal A. D. Naoroji who is at Panchgani and has survived a very serious illness. He is still in bed, but is able to read books and prosecute his studies. Jal wrote about Cooper who has invented a new plough capable of yielding an increase in crops from 15 to 150 per cent. To him Bapu replied as follows :

"If Mr Cooper's plough is what he claims it to be, I should have no objection to its use, merely because it is a steel plough and therefore the village carpenter will be deprived of a portion of his work. I do not mind the partial deprivation of the carpenter if the plough increases the earning capacity of the farmer. But I have very grave doubts about the claims made by Mr Cooper for his invention. At Sabarmati we have tried almost all improved ploughs manufactured in India and I think even others, but the claims made for each variety have not proved true in the long run. An experienced man has said that the indigenous plough is specially designed for the Indian soil. It conserves the soil, because it ploughs deep enough for the farmer's crops but never deep enough to do damage. Of course I do not claim to understand agriculture. I am simply giving you the testimony of those who have had considerable experience in these matters. What we have to remember is that all improved implements have to meet the peculiar conditions of India. There is nothing wrong in an engine plough in itself and it may be a great advantage to a man who owns thousands of acres of land, and has a cracked caky soil, which will not yield under the indigenous plough. What, however, we want is an implement that would suit owners of small holdings from one acre to three acres."

Jal also referred to the doctrine of the greatest good of the greatest number, about which Bapu wrote as follows :

"I do not believe in the doctrine of the greatest good of the greatest number. It means in its nakedness that in order to achieve the supposed good of 51 per cent. the interest of 49 per cent. may be, or rather, should be sacrificed. It is a heartless doctrine and has done harm to humanity. The only real, dignified, human doctrine is the greatest good of all, and this can only be achieved by uttermost self-sacrifice."

Part of a letter to Miss Peterson:

"'Be careful for nothing' is one of the verses that have ever remained with me and taken possession of me. If God is, why need I care? He is the infallible caretaker. He is a foolish man who fusses although he is well protected."

A news-item of some interest from Bombay is that Government has refused protection to Sheth Lalji Naranji and ordered him to leave Bombay, while no such order has been served on the Muslim hooligan or his instigators. Congressmen guilty of a breach of their parole are sentenced to imprisonment for two years and a fine of from 100 to 1,000 Rs., while hooligans caught with deadly weapons upon their person are let off with a fine of 5 Rs.

In his *Studies in Vedanta*, Kirtikar has given a good exposition of the Hindu attitude to image worship. He says Hindus worship not the image but God of whom it is a symbol, and quotes Tukaram's *abhang*, *Kela maticha pashupati* etc. in support:

'The image of Shiva is made of earth, but what is that to the earth? The worship proceeds to Shiva, while earth mingles with earth. The image of Vishnu is made of stone, but the stone is not Vishnu; the worship goes to Vishnu while the stone remains only a stone. The image of Jagadamba (Mother of the universe) is made of bronze, but the bronze is not Mataji. The worship goes up to Mataji's feet, while bronze remains only bronze. So also we are revered as saints, but the reverence is intended for God whose servants we continue to be.'

Dahyabhai came to interview Bapu, who did not go out to meet him. He said Government might take a month to reply to his letter, but it would be improper for him to

continue to meet interviewers during all that period. The Sardar and I pressed him to go but he remained adamant. The beauty of it was that a letter was just then received by the Superintendent to the effect that as Mirabehn was taking part in the political movement of civil disobedience, she could not be considered a non-political Ashramite. Upon the letter being shown to Bapu he said,

'It was a good thing after all that I did not go. God has often saved me like this before.'

JUNE 5, 1932

Bapu's left elbow was packed in splints. The doctor asked Bapu a dozen times to let him know if he was hurting him, but Bapu would not say anything about it, and observed: 'I cannot say that this will give me relief, but I make this experiment as the doctors have advised it.' The doctor is rather talkative. The beggar problem cropped up during the talk, and the doctor asked, 'Gandhiji, don't you think able-bodied men should be prevented from begging?' Bapu replied, 'Certainly.' The doctor put him a further question: 'Would you make a law to that effect?' Bapu answered: 'Oh yes, but men like me would be free to beg.'

The doctor: 'Lord Reading has arrived at an estimate that we spend sixteen lakhs of rupees a day on beggars, that is in charity. Could not this sum be put to a better use?'

The Sardar: 'Sure, but we spend even larger sums on robbers.'

The doctor: 'I don't follow you.'

The Sardar: 'Don't you? Are not all these people who have come from Britain robbers? Are they any better than that?'

The best comment on separate electorates for the 'untouchables' has been made by Natarajan who quotes from the report of the Simon Commission to show that even they had realized the dangerous nature of this provision and offers stiff opposition to it.

Bapu is reading Kirtikar's *Studies in Vedanta*, which was sent by Jayakar. In the chapter on *tat tvam asi* (That thou art) he quotes the following from Hegel at the beginning :

'It is man's highest dignity that he should know himself to be a nullity.'

Bapu showed this to me and I said, 'This is what you describe as reducing ourselves to zero.' Bapu was observing silence ; so he laughed. He had shown the quotation to me to draw my attention to the coincidence.

Rolland's life of Vivekananda gives us much valuable information. Every one knows how he toured all over India before he went to America, but I came to know only from this book that in the course of these travels he saw God as the poor man in India and dedicated himself to His service :

" It was the misery under his eyes, the misery of India that filled his mind to the exclusion of every other thought. It consumed him during sleepless nights. At Cape Comorin it caught and held him in its jaws. He dedicated his life to the unhappy masses. He told them with pathetic passion of the imperious call of suffering India that forced him to go : " It is now my firm conviction that it is futile to preach religion amongst them, without first trying to remove their poverty and their sufferings. It is for this reason — to find more means for the salvation of the poor India — that I am now going to America."

I was under the impression that he went to America to teach her Vedanta. But his idea was that religious propaganda for which there is no scope in India should be carried on in America and India's poverty relieved with assistance from the land of the Almighty Dollar. On returning from England he remarked that he could not bring funds from there as he had expected.

" In that respect his journey had failed. The work had to be taken up again on a new basis. India was to be regenerated by India. Health was to come from within." So says Rolland, and goes on to explain :

" And so in Vivekanand's eyes the task was a double one : to take to India the money and the goods acquired by

western civilization and to take to the west the spiritual treasures of India. A loyal exchange. A fraternal and mutual help."

Could religion be traded like this? Upon my drawing Bapu's attention to these passages, he remarked:

'Vivekananda here fails in his usual *vivek* (discrimination) and so does Rolland.'

JUNE 6, 1932

The *Leader* reproduces Lord Irwin's Toronto speech *in extenso*. Upon its being read to Bapu, he remarked: 'His speech is not likely to give offence to anybody. But what is to be done? No good Englishman realizes that British rule has pauperized India. Irwin quotes from Ashok and hopes that posterity in India will bless the Britisher even as they bless Ashok. But the one differs from the other as the devil differs from the Holy Spirit.'

The speech is elaborate and learned, but full of cunning and mischief. I think Irwin is responsible for the usual statement that Congress is only one of the many parties in India, and he reiterates it here. 'Congress refuses to recognize the indefeasible rights of the minorities. Gandhi is a great leader but a leader of the Hindus only. He can induce Hindus to make any sacrifice he chooses, but non-Hindus will not listen to him. Muslims are the only foreigners whom Hinduism failed to absorb in spite of its voracious vitality,' and so on. And the task of maintaining peace and order devolves on the British!

JNUE 7, 1932

Today's *Times of India* reports that the riots still continue in Bombay. The arrest of Dikshit is hailed as a great achievement, but the authorities do not realize the necessity of finding out who is at the bottom of these riots, for they know who is.

Read Sir Henry Lawrence's and Hotson's speeches at the Bombay dinner. Sir Henry's speech is evidence enough for the impression that he must have carried on poisonous propaganda in Canada:

" He was prepared to hand Mr Gandhi the halo of a saint for his conduct at that time ; but he would ask them to judge whether if a man was saint at one time he was necessarily a saint for all time. That reputation of sanctity had been of wonderful value to him in his subsequent manoeuvres."

The man seems to have as black a heart as he has a sweet tongue. Bapu said, 'How is it that these people take delight in speaking ill of me after having cast me in prison ? Have they not sense enough to observe the rule of *Nil nisi bonum* ? '

Hotson's speech was a good one — for him. He has a real appreciation of the influence of Congress: 'Indian merchants are not enemies of the British ; still it is remarkable that some of them who usually support charities are now financing a political movement. Women who never so much as moved out of their homes are now out and prepared to make all manner of sacrifices. This points to the necessity of exploring some way out of the present impasse, and of giving an assurance of financial independence to British merchants instead of illusory safeguards.'

The tempo of propaganda can be gauged from the fact that Satyamurti's letter to Bapu has not still been received by him but has already been printed in *The Times of India*, just to show that Congress would be satisfied with provincial autonomy.

In answer to Bapu's letter Natarajan writes :

" I fully realize the force of your reasoning on the need for clear-cut condemnation of what we feel to be grave evils, even though one's judgment may not be perfect or final. In fact, I had said as much in my letter. But I sometimes feel that I, the reformer, was hasty in the judgment of good men and had hurt their feelings, and my present temper is perhaps due to the desire to avoid that mistake."

June 8, 1932

A letter from Polak who writes to Bapu :

'London papers report that " you have taken up the

sewing machine having been disillusioned with the slowness of charkha." I don't believe it for a moment. But it needs a prompt denial.'

Bapu sent him a long reply in which he described the consequences of his not revising a letter once and leaving out 'no.' About Ba he said,

"She has aged considerably — in some respects perhaps more than I have. Spiritually she has made wonderful progress."

And then he dealt at length with the spinning-wheel:

"It will take me many incarnations to become disillusioned with the slowness of the charkha. The slowness of the charkha is perhaps its most appealing part for me. But it has so many attractions for me that I can never get tired of it. It has a perennial interest for me. Its implications are growing on me and I make discoveries of its beauties almost from day to day. I am *not* using a sewing machine in its place or at all. I know how the mistake crept into the papers. My right elbow, having been used for turning the wheel almost without a break for over ten years, began to give pain, and the doctors here came to the conclusion that the pain was of the same type that tennis players often have after continuous use of the racket. They therefore advised complete rest for the elbow. That might have meant cessation of spinning for some time, but for Prabhudas's invention. You know Prabhudas, Chhaganlal's son. His invention consists in turning the wheel with a pedal and thus freeing the right hand also for drawing the thread and practically doubling the output of yarn. I forestalled the doctors by having this wheel brought to me, and before the peremptory order to stop all work with the right elbow came, I was master of the pedal charkha called 'Magan charkha' after the late Maganlal. A stupid reporter who knew nothing about the invention, when he heard that I was moving the wheel with the pedal, came to the conclusion that I was working at the sewing machine, and since there are pressmen good enough to imagine many things of me and impute all sorts of things to me, they improved upon the false report by deducing

disillusionment about the charkha from it. Now you have the whole story."

X is in financial trouble and deep anxiety as Mirabehn informed Bapu. His advice to X is fit to be treasured by all rich men :

'Remember that (1) he who makes money has the right to lose it ; (2) There is no shame in losing it, but to lose it and to conceal the losses is both shameful and sinful ; (3) Never live beyond your means. Live in a palace today but be in readiness to live in a hut tomorrow ; (4) There is nothing to be ashamed of if you have not enough money to pay creditors off ; (5) A debtor who hands over all his possessions to his creditors has paid them in full ; (6) Never carry on trade with borrowed money — this is the first principle. The second is to give the lenders all you have and have done with it.

'You are free to go to the Ashram whenever you like.'

Bapu is now reading the fourth book of the Urdu series published by the Anjuman-i-himayat-i-Islam, Lahore. Before going to bed this evening he said, 'This book makes me sadder and sadder. It seems as if Muslim children are being taught the lesson of violence and force from their very babyhood. The life of the Prophet is reduced to a series of battles. The writer has miserably failed to realize the secret of his master's life.'

Durga, Narayan, Anandi and Raman met me today. Durga brought mangoes. But we have some already ; therefore Bapu suggested that they should be sent to Parchure Shastri, as we were not in jail to eat mangoes.

Anandi wept as she could not meet Bapu. I told him about this ; so he said, 'Others also will weep as she does, and it is no pleasure to me to disappoint them all. But I am helpless.'

Tried to look at the sky with the telescope sent by Prof. Jayashankar Trivedi. Saw something more than with the naked eye, but I was not satisfied.

JUNE 9, 1932

Bapu dictated many letters ; so that there was no time to use the telescope. He suggested that a quarter of an hour a day should be set apart for it.

Bapu saw to it that as many as 50 mangoes were sent to the Shastri and his fellow-prisoners in the leprosy ward.

Jamnalalji's letter is full of details as regards his health, diet, and the reasons for his giving up B class. His vigilance is astonishing.

Even as it was, he lived a life of self-restraint, and to it has now been added *tapas* (self-suffering). He says he has derived lifelong benefit from Vinoba's company ; the same must be the case with several others. Is it Ramakrishna or Vivekanand who says that life has been worth living if it has led to the uplift of a single soul ?

To Y Bapu wrote : 'For the mind to be invaded by evil thoughts and thus to be worried is self-created hell. If you realize it as such, it will be easy for you to devise methods of getting out of it. Do not think over again about the evil thoughts you have had, but proceed as if they had never occurred to you. A man might stumble, but he must not sit down thinking as to how he stumbled, and what consequences would follow from the slip. But he must press forward in spite of it, and if he does, he will forget all about it. His progress tends to increase his strength, and with the accession of strength there is a reduced possibility of stumbling once more.'

JUNE 10, 1932

Bapu met some fellow-prisoners. While talking with them he said that burning letters in letter-boxes was fruitless destruction. fraught with violence and a senseless imitation of the British suffragettes.

The letter Bapu wrote to Chhaganlal Joshi was an important one :

'Most of the labour in the Ashram is attended to by the Ashramites themselves. There are a few hired labourers still left, but they are such as are likely to observe Ashram rules, and Ashramites work in company with them. They

are gradually mastering the know-how of all physical labour. The children too bear their share. Prayers and hymns are the first things taught to newcomers. It is after these have been mastered that those who wish to learn English may do so. An hour's sacrificial spinning is done by all members at the same time. Yarn coarser than 20s cannot count as part of sacrificial spinning. Every day's output of yarn should be sent to the Ashram office the same day. If the Ashramites agree to it, I suggest that no one should be allowed to buy back his own yarn. It seems to me that the sacrifice is incomplete so long as this concession is enjoyed. It has been decided that a ledger should be kept in which wages should be credited to each account at the rate of one anna an hour, irrespective of the nature of the work done. But payment at this rate has not been agreed to. For the present I suggest to Narandas that he should begin to keep accounts like this if the idea appeals to him. This account book will be in addition to the books usually kept and will give us some idea of the results. It will furnish us with most of the data, and it may be a guide to the Ashram seeing its way to give equal wages to all. That is to say, whether it is spinning, weaving, cleaning the sanitary conveniences or any other type of social service, the uniform rate of payment will be an anna per hour. You will remember that this question has been discussed before in all its aspects. In my recent letters to Narandas I dealt with the subject again. Narandas' capacity for carrying out ideas like this is now greater. He has therefore welcomed my suggestion. Keeping this book need not take much time, and if what is only experimental at present reaches the stage of actual practice, it will be so easy that it can be done by one who has ordinary knowledge of Gujarati. The success of this measure must depend upon the members' character; for if any of them shirk their work or do it indifferently, the books will not be an accurate presentation of facts; i.e. money earned will be mixed up with the money stolen, so to say.

'I also deal in my letters with the question of

educating children. I do not know how far the Ashramites are prepared to receive my ideas on this subject. But I have no time to write to you about them just now.

'We must make the best possible use of the invaluable leisure in jail. Perhaps the best of uses would be to cultivate the power of independent thought. We are often thoughtless and therefore like only to read books, or worse still, to talk. Some of us do think but they only build castles in the air. As a matter of fact there is an art of thinking just as there is an art of reading. We should be able to think the right thought at the right time, and not indulge in thinking useless thoughts as well as in reading useless books. The mental energy generated and conserved as a result of such discipline will be very great indeed. It is my experience during every incarceration that it affords us a fine opportunity of thinking like this to some purpose. Therefore my advice to all of you is that you must master the art of deep thought, and if you do, you will not need to ask me many questions. But let not any one misunderstand this advice. I do not forbid you to ask questions. I only seek to end your dependence on others. For the rest here I am, and it is not only your right but duty to derive what benefit you can from my thoughts and experiences.'

There are two good articles in the *Leader*, one on the proprietorship of the *Pioneer* and the other on separate electorates in Kashmir. The *Pioneer* deal flows from the unholy alliance between Britishers and Indian Muslims although Shrivastav and a few other Hindu *zamindars* are among the directors. The British-Muslim bloc would undertake to support the *zamindars* who in their turn would agree to give special representation to British commercial interests and to the Muslims. Bapu remarked: 'We shall know everything when the *Pioneer* discusses the question of franchise.'

JUNE 11, 1932

The Sardar: 'The pain started from the thumb and has reached the elbow. It is now time for it to mount the shoulder. Enough of spinning now.'

Bapu: 'Some day or other one must mount the shoulders of the bearers.'

The Sardar: 'No, no. Don't leave us in the lurch. Bring the ship to shore, and then go where you like. And I will go with you.'

Long discussion with the Major as regards giving writing materials to C class prisoners. The Major would not give in on the ground that the concession would be misused by some prisoners. Bapu pointed out that it was granted in all other jails. The Major replied that it should be withdrawn everywhere. This annoyed Bapu.

JUNE 12, 1932

Bapu dictated a letter to Doyle on the subject discussed with the Superintendent yesterday.

The best part of the news today is Verrier Elwin's statement. It was good in a way that yesterday's *Times of India* published the false rumour about him, as it gave him the opportunity to write about Congress.

Natarajan has finely protested against the knighthood conferred on Magistrate Dastur and paid a touching tribute to Dorab Tata, referring to his love for his wife whose biography he published during his last days and Lady Aberdeen's comparison of their love with that of Shah Jahan and the lady of the Taj. How is it that the readers written for our children carry no lesson on Dorab Tata, Jamshedji Tata and the like?

JUNE 13, 1932

Bapu's reply to Bharati's letter:

'Your letter in an excellent hand. I would never be tired of receiving such letters.

'You, sisters as well as brothers, should certainly develop a strong physique, able to endure heat as well as cold. But you must go slow. For instance I would not subject you all at once to the heat even in Simla. It is an error to imagine that people who are soft at all times can all at once become hard when the time comes. That would

be doing violence to nature. I can think of hundreds of such cases just now.

'I would surely like to read literature. At school I could not go beyond the school lessons. After that I have been so busy with one thing or another that there was little time to read outside prison. In prison only I was able to read something. But I do not find that I have lost much on this account. For if I could not read, I could think a great deal, and the school of life is any day superior to the school of books.

'People who claim to pursue "art for art's sake" are unable to make good their claim. There is a place for art in life, apart from the question — What is art. But art can only be a means to the end which we must all of us achieve. If however it becomes an end in itself, it enslaves and degrades humanity.

'God means Truth. For the last few years I have been saying that Truth is God instead of 'God is Truth.' The former statement is more consonant with facts, for in this world there is nothing besides Truth. Truth here should be understood in a wide sense. It is full of intelligence. God as Truth and His Law are not different but one and the same; therefore it also is full of intelligence. Indeed it is all the same whether we say that the universe is a function of Truth or that it is a function of Law. This Truth is charged with infinite power. In the language of the Gita, chapter 10, the universe is sustained by a fraction of it. Therefore if you replace the word God by the word Truth wherever it occurs, you will have some idea of what I mean.

'If God is, it is our duty to worship Him even if we recognize him as Truth. We tend to become what we worship. That is the whole and comprehensive meaning of prayer. Truth abides in the human heart. But we realize it indifferently or not at all. Sincere prayer is the key to such realization.

'Have you difficulty in deciphering my hand? The envelope in which this letter is enclosed was made by the Sardar who thus utilizes every available piece of paper not fit to be put to other use.'

This letter is a good specimen of Bapu's concise style. There is much that it leaves as understood. Apart from the question — What is art? — there is this question: What is beauty? We cannot grasp with our hands the sky with its sun, moon and stars or the sea with its roar as deep as the knowledge of the soul, but they help us to realize our insignificance in the scheme of the universe. There is beauty too in snow-capped mountains and in rivers large and small. This beauty cannot but have an ennobling effect on all people, only the dullest excepted. As Kant puts it: "Beauty gives us pleasure from the mere contemplation thereof, apart from the vulgar ideas of possession and use." Hence its power to comfort and to elevate. The same thing is true of art. All art is an expression or a reflection of the human soul; therefore as is the soul, so is the art. Art for art's sake is impossible for the artist as well as the lover of art. The artist's soul will be reflected in his art, and the man who enjoys it will rise or fall according as it is ennobling or degrading.

JUNE 14, 1932

Bapu takes lemon squash with soda twice a day, at 9 a.m. and 6 p.m. Lemons are dearer in summer. Therefore Bapu suggested the use of tamarind instead, as there are many tamarind trees in jail. But the Sardar rejected the suggestion, as tamarind water was supposed to be bad for the bones and to cause rheumatism. Bapu said, 'But Jamnalalji is taking tamarind.' The Sardar replied, 'It will not do him harm, as it cannot penetrate deep enough to reach his bones.' Bapu said he himself too had taken a lot of tamarind. The Sardar said that was when he had a splendid digestion as a young man. It would not suit him now in his old age.

Doyle, the Inspector General of Prisons, saw Bapu in connection with the question of giving writing materials to C class prisoners. He was extremely courteous. He shook hands with all of us and said to Bapu, 'I could not come earlier as I was very busy. Your request is reasonable and I will give the necessary instructions to Major Bhandari.

But please do not ask for general orders. The facility should certainly be granted to all who can make a good use of it.' Turning to the Sardar he said, 'I am arranging to transfer good women prisoners from Belgam to Yeravda as suggested by your daughter. Please tell her not to be anxious about them.' I formed a very good opinion of him, but the jailer violently disagreed: 'He has certainly acceded to Bapu's every request, but the experience of subordinates like myself is of a different kind.'

Doyle said he acted on the principle that in jail they would not take the conduct of a prisoner outside jail into account. Thus a turbulent murderer would be placed on a par with gentler prisoners. Perhaps that is the right thing to do. The treatment a convict is to receive in jail must depend upon his conduct inside jail and not upon the nature of his crime. And still there is discrimination typified by the black and yellow caps given to some prisoners.

After reading Birla's forthcoming book on Indian currency Bapu remarked: 'The big theft is not theft, the big robbery is not robbery and murder on a colossal scale is righteous warfare. Not being satisfied with draining away the country's wealth, Britishers manipulated the currency for their own selfish purposes, depleted the reserves. No country in the world was bled white like this. Mahmud of Ghazni's looting expeditions were limited in number, and the property plundered by the Moghuls remained in the country after all. But robbery by the British in India is unique.'

JUNE 15, 1932

The Major was rather surprised at Doyle's visit and his complying with the request for writing materials. But as regards some things shown to us by Doyle which we thought had been handed to him by the Major, we found that he had received them from another jail altogether. Upon this Bapu observed: 'See how we have done an injustice to this officer once again. It is dangerous hastily to sit in judgment over anybody.'

From Bapu's letter to S. who is in the habit of asking useful questions, though they arise from purposeless curiosity :

'You are under the impression that I must live long as I have lived a life of self-restraint and *brahmacharya*. But you are wrong, or right only to the extent that my indulgence has been less than that of others. I lived the life of the ordinary married man of the world till the age of 30. Nor was I abstemious as regards food. I ate a number of things just for the pleasure of it. After that my life turned in the direction of self-restraint, though I had not achieved a conquest of the senses. I only learned to keep them under control. Therefore, my physique had already been affected as a result of indulgence. This effect was only mitigated by the subsequent self-control. But my contemporaries who did not exercise the same self-restraint were dazzled by my conduct and were therefore unable to realize my weaknesses.'

As regards the 'concessions enjoyed by you in jail which had an adverse effect on others,' Bapu wrote :

'The amenities I enjoy as a prisoner are not due to classification. I am not a convict but a detenu. Detenus have always been entitled to a number of concessions not granted to ordinary prisoners. But this is no defence of my action. Government may grant some facilities to prisoners like myself, but to accept or to reject them rests with the prisoners themselves. Therefore it is natural that there should be such misunderstanding as you refer to. I continue to enjoy the special facilities even at the risk of being thus misunderstood with a view to the public interest. But it should not be necessary to defend my action. Its propriety must be clear on the face of it. But even if it is not, I must go my way so long as I am sure that I am right. This principle applies to the leader who cannot always account for the course he is pursuing. But if he deviates from it though it appears to him to be the right course simply because of criticism to which he is subjected, he is not fit to be leader, and will lead his followers to destruction. Therefore you must certainly warn me when doubts assail

your mind, but if in spite of your warning I go along the previous path, you should have faith enough in me to believe that it is the right path. Such faith is sometimes later on found to be misplaced, but it is the *sine qua non* for the conduct of public associations. I feel that I have the capacity of doing without all these amenities when the time comes. I have been an ordinary prisoner in South Africa for a considerable period.'

June 16, 1932

Telegram from Hanumanprasad about Devadas' illness in Gorakhpur prison. He had fever, but it was not enteric fever, and he is now well. We knew nothing about it; therefore Bapu wired asking for further details, and wrote to Devadas as follows:

'I was troubled by a strange fear. The day before yesterday I had felt as if I would receive some such news, and I had the telegram yesterday. I asked the Sardar at once what it was about, and he told me it was about your illness. It was impossible that you should live in a place like Gorakhpur and not be attacked by fever. But I hope that you will have recovered by the time you get this letter. I have an impression that you would like the company of friends and relatives on an occasion like this. You deserve to be thus surrounded for you have rendered service to many. But I am a man of stony heart and therefore cannot bring myself to ask anybody hereabouts to go to a distant place like Gorakhpur. Indeed if any one got ready to go, I would stop him. Philosophy would be little worth if it did not guide me in dealing with you. Realize this, bear your trouble patiently and be cheerful. God is the true father, mother, relative and friend. Others are only so called; they are helpless themselves and unable to help even if they wish. Do not therefore depend upon them but upon God who is present everywhere. He will send you such help as He thinks fit. I am confident that you will attract your neighbours to yourself, no matter where you are, whether in jail or outside.

'After having said this, I would leave you free to send a wire if you want any one in the Ashram to attend upon you. But I hope that your illness will have been a thing of the past when this comes into your hands. Of course our blessings are with you always.'

A letter from Sarojini Naidu in which she writes about the things she is cooking:

"Samples of wonderful cookery: toffee made of tamarind pulp and jaggery, khichri [rice and pulse] cooked in a broth of drumsticks and other delicacies purely original and spontaneous in inspiration!"

Taking a cue from it I asked the Sardar if I should prepare drumsticks for him in case they were available from the jail garden. The Sardar replied, 'Nonsense. You cannot do it at all.' Bapu said the Sardar would appreciate it if the drumsticks were cooked along with gram flour and all that; boiled vegetable would not do for him. He then went on to say, 'If vegetables are most thoroughly spoiled anywhere in the world, that place is India. We are in the same plight in that respect as the Emperors of Rome described by Gibbon in the beginning of his *Decline and Fall of the Roman Empire*. We have cultivated an artificial taste for a variety of things, and discovered a lot of condiments, so that we take the vegetable only on account of the condiment.'

I said, 'Some things cannot be eaten at all without condiments. For instance there is a kind of *suran* (yam) which must be boiled in an oven along with *gud* (jaggery), tamarind and condiments.' Bapu observed that he would look upon such things as inedible. '*Alvi* (potato) leaves cannot be taken if they are only boiled; we therefore put in gram flour and such other stuff. Why not take it that they can never constitute part of our food?'

Hoare-Belisha says, 'We are importing less foreign goods to the tune of £ 16 m. That means a saving for us. But what about the reduction in exports? This question can only be solved at Lausanne and Ottawa, where our aim should be a policy of free trade within the British Empire.

If other countries do not buy our manufactures, how can we compel them to do so ? '

Whom the gods would destroy, they first make mad. If the British want to save even their trade, can they do it with the help of Haroon, Shanmukham Chetty and Atul Chatterji, or will they have to consult Gandhi and Purushottamdas and Birla too ?

Bapu's letter to the Ashram this week is important as usual. He suggests that labourers engaged by it should wear Khadi, abstain from drink and send their children to school. 'We must have faith that if we enter into their lives, share their sorrows as well as joys and make friends with their children, they will observe other rules of their own accord and in an intelligent manner. We must prove that our company for them is good company.' Bapu further suggests that Ashramites must make friends with the Chharas (a criminal community encamped near the Ashram) if they dare. The one scientific and simple condition of such friendship is that we must reduce ourselves to zero. This is easy for the dull and for men of knowledge, but difficult for those who come in between.

Parshuram's son was ill in Kanpur. He had not the courage to leave his work and go there. So he was unhappy. To him Bapu wrote : 'It may be your duty to go there if you have any specific cure for the boy's illness or if your very presence is likely to cure him. That is, you may leave your work if possible and go in such a case, not for the sake of Vimal's brother but because it would be your duty to go, no matter who the patient was. A man can surmount his weakness only by passing through such experiences. Let us hope the boy is all right now.'

As regards the suggestion that some people overwork themselves in a spirit of rivalry and should have maximum hours fixed for them, Bapu wrote :

'Yes. I believe the maximum hours should be fixed if possible, but they may be different for different persons. Where people work in the family spirit and where each has the same sense of personal responsibility as the others, it is impossible to fix the maximum period applicable to

all and may even be improper. How can we frame a rule that one who is physically fit and mentally ready and who has no other service to perform shall not work overtime if he wishes? The long and short of it is that if there is discrimination and the right spirit in work and no bustle, no one would feel it to be a burden. Things are felt as a burden only if they are imposed upon us from outside. Work done spontaneously and joyfully is never oppressive. But he who works in a demoniacal spirit will subject himself to considerable burdens from selfishness and suffer a breakdown afterwards. He does not enjoy mental tranquillity and we can never take him for our model.

'It is not wrong to say that woman is the root of all evil for a sensual man, just as a gold mine is veritable hell for the covetous. But for the world at large gold may be beneficially used in a variety of ways.'

From Bapu's letter to Narayanappa:

"There is nothing like finding one's full satisfaction from one's daily task however humble it may be. To those that wait and watch and pray, God always brings greater tasks and responsibilities."

In his letter to Mirabehn Bapu refers to the pain in his hands and the experiment in saltless diet, and then says:

"There is a splendid sentence in Sir James Jeans' book: 'Life is a progress towards death.' Another reading may be: Life is a preparation for death. And somehow or other we quail to think of that inevitable and grand event. It is a grand event as a preparation for a better life than the past, as it should be for everyone who tries to live in the fear of God." *

To X who asked if it was true that Bapu had allowed a venomous snake to pass over his body, he wrote:

'It is both true and not true. The snake was passing over my body. In a case like that, what could I or any one else do except to lie motionless? This hardly calls for any praise. And who knows whether or not the snake was poisonous? The idea that death is not a fearful event

* *Bapu's Letters to Mira* (Navajivan). pp. 194-195. *Ed.*

has been cherished by me for many a year, so that I recover soon enough from the shock of the death even of near and dear ones.'

JUNE 17, 1932

Bapu's observation on death in his yesterday's letter to Mirabehn has a parallel in Goethe's letter to his daughter:

" How could I be other than happy in the thought that at last he has attained that eternal bliss for which his whole earthly life had been a preparation? "

In his letter to Chhaganlal Joshi Bapu wrote on *aparigraha* (non-possession) as follows:

'From day to day I realize the fact that nature produces every moment the amount needed at that moment and no more. We fail to take count of this fact consciously or unconsciously. This failure is responsible for the universal spectacle of men suffering from surfeit here and from want there. We are devising a corrective for the present situation in which there is starvation on the one hand and burning of so called surplus wheat by producers in the U. S. A. on the other. Perfect obedience to nature's law is indeed impossible at present, but that need not worry us.'

Premabehn asked Bapu why he was opposed to the use of images. Our ideas about God have changed from time to time as a result of changing political and social conditions. There was Swaraj in Shankara's time, therefore he equated the individual soul with the universal soul. Swaraj was lost when Ramanuja flourished: he therefore suggested that man should aim at becoming God's slave. Tukaram saw God in the image at Pandharpur. To her Bapu replied as follows:

'I do not forbid the use of images in prayer. I only prefer the worship of the Formless. This preference is perhaps improper. One thing suits one man; another thing will suit another man, and no comparison can fairly be made between the two. You are not right about Shankara and Ramanuja. Spiritual experience has greater influence than environment. The seeker of truth should not be

affected by his surroundings but rise above them. Views based on the environment are often found to be wrong. For instance take the case of body and soul. The soul being at present in close contact with the body, we cannot at once realize her as distinct from her physical vesture. Therefore it was a very great man indeed who rose above his environment and said, " It (the soul) is not this (the body)." The language of saints like Tukaram should not be taken in a literal sense. I suggest that you read his *abhang, kela maticha pashupati* etc. The moral is that we must realize the idea which underlies the words of holy men. It is quite possible that they worshipped the Formless even while they pictured God in a particular form. This is impossible for ordinary mortals like ourselves, and therefore we would be in a sorry plight if we did not penetrate a little deeper into the implications of their statements.

'If a man is absorbed in his work, he will not feel the burden of it ; it will not therefore wear him down. But if he takes no delight in it, even a little work will be too much for him. For a man in prison a day is as long as a year : for the sensualist a year is as a day. I was soon tired of European music when I heard it before, but now I understand and appreciate something of it.'

Cf. " The man who loves God does not measure his work by the eight-hour system. He works at all hours and is never off duty. As he has opportunity he does good. Everywhere, at all times, and in all places, he finds opportunity to work for God. He carries fragrance with him wherever he goes."

From a letter to X: 'You must not lose self-confidence. Evil thoughts may enter the mind ; but just as the house from which the refuse is removed from time to time is clean, so is the mind which rejects the evil thoughts just as they enter it, and victory is bound to attend its effort at self-purification. One who is thus vigilant cannot be considered a hypocrite. The golden rule for salvation from hypocrisy is this : Do not conceal the evil thoughts but make a public confession of them. This need not be made with the beat of drum. But the fault

must be revealed to a friend. And it should not matter if everyone else also comes to know about it. Have faith in Vinoba's words and do not despair.'

To some one who suggested Satyagraha against political prisoners taken out of jail for work being chained and fettered : 'Nothing as regards the conduct of prisoners can be sent from here for publication. Clarification on this point is desirable but that must await a suitable opportunity. However I still think that the distinction between ordinary and political prisoners is invalid. There is need for reform in the administration of prisons. A prison should be a house of correction and not punishment. If that is so, why should a forger have fetters on his legs in prison ? The fetters will not improve his character. To my mind it is intolerable that any one should be fettered if there is no likelihood of his trying to escape or becoming unmanageable. But if a political prisoner is an athlete like you, always thinking out means of escape and unable to control his tongue and hands, it will be the duty of the authorities to put him in fetters. We reformers should not seek for any concessions which cannot be justified on ethical grounds and are not granted to all prisoners in the same category. I should be unable to stand an arrangement by which wheat is given to politicals and maize to ordinary prisoners. Wheat bread must be issued to a prisoner who is unable to digest maize even if he is a murderer. And a political prisoner who has splendid digestion must give up wheat and ask for maize, and thus protect his fellow-prisoners. But these are only my views upon which I must not insist from where I am. Let each follow the dictates of his own conscience.'

June 18, 1932

In a letter to Bhau Bapu gave detailed instructions about *dhyana* (meditation) : 'There is nothing wrong if you draw a picture by your own imagination and meditate over it. But nothing like it if one could rest content with the meditation of Mother Gita. This can be done either by thinking of one's dead mother as the symbol of the

Gita or by drawing a self-imagined mental picture. Mother cow for instance would serve the latter purpose. The second method is preferable if possible. We may meditate on any Gita verse or even one single word in it. Every word in the Gita is an ornament of hers, and to think of an ornament of our beloved object is as good as thinking of it itself. But some one could devise a third mode of meditation and should be free to practise his own device. Every brain works differently from every other brain. No two persons think of the same thing in the same way. There is bound to be some difference or other between their descriptions and imaginings.

'As the sixth chapter assures us, the least little *sadhana* (spiritual effort) is not wasted. The seeker will proceed further in his next birth, starting from it as a base. Similarly if a person has the will but not the ability to make spiritual progress, his environment in his subsequent birth will be such as to strengthen that will. But this fact must not be made an excuse for relaxation now. If it is so made, it means that the will is only intellectual and not heart-felt. Intellectual willing serves no useful purpose, as it does not persist after death. If the will is heart-felt, it must manifest itself in effort. But it is quite possible that physical weakness as well as the environment may come in its way. Even so, when the soul leaves the body, it carries its good will with it, which fructifies into deed in the subsequent birth when circumstances are more favourable. Thus one who does good is sure to make steady progress.

'Jnaneshvar may have meditated on Nivritti during the latter's lifetime. But we must not follow his example. One on whom we meditate must be a perfect individual. To ascribe such perfection to a living person is improper and unnecessary. Again it is possible that Jnaneshvar meditated on Nivritti not as he actually was but as he had imagined him to be. Such refinement is not however for people like ourselves. When we raise the question of meditating on a living person, there is no room for a mental image of him. If the question is answered

with such an image in view, it can only throw the questioner into mental confusion.

'All the names given in the first chapter of the Gita are in my opinion not so much proper nouns as names of qualities. In describing the eternal warfare between the heavenly and the devilish natures, the poet has personified them as the characters in the Mahabharat. This does not imply a refusal to believe that an actual battle took place at Hastinapur between the Pandavas and the Kauravas. I hold that the poet took some such actual event as the thread upon which to hang his discourse. But I may be wrong. Again if all the names given are the names of real historical characters, the poet has done nothing improper in giving the list at the historical beginning. And as the first chapter is an essential part of the subject-matter of the Gita, it too should be recited as part of *Gitapatha*.

'To spin with slivers made by another is certainly an imperfect sacrifice. One who is physically disabled like myself may be unable to make his own slivers. But every one who is physically fit should certainly card for himself.'

Mathuradas writes from Nasik that he has written a play advocating divorce of which Kishorlalbhai expresses appreciation. In order to prove the necessity of birth control he argues that *brahmacharya* is not possible for every man. No comparison can be instituted between men and beasts which obtain sexual satisfaction when and where they like. Birth control is not bad because it can be abused and so on.

To him Bapu replied as follows: 'I never thought you would write a play. You are leaning towards ultra-modern civilization. I believe that divorce should be granted within well-defined limits but would never think of carrying on propaganda in favour of it. We are generally such bond-slaves of our predilections that our mental state today cannot be guaranteed to last till tomorrow. Therefore marriage contracted voluntarily should not be dissolved except for very strong reasons. Just imagine our plight if I had dissolved my marriage with Ba because she would

not readily accept my views on untouchability. Would we have been happy as we are now? Where would Ba be today? And what sort of second wife might I have married? But I was influenced by the traditional view of the indissolubility of the marriage tie; so that crisis blew over and is now a mere memory. I therefore hope that in your play you do not permit people to obtain an easy divorce.

'I can understand the necessity of artificial methods of birth control if it were man's duty to satisfy the sexual urge whenever it arises. But if it is a sin, as I think it is, to gratify the sexual instinct when the desire for progeny is absent, birth control through artificial means would be tantamount to shirking the payment of the wages of sin. As a man sows so should he be ready to reap. If he gratifies his instinct, let him bear the burden of children. Birth control as practised in the West has led to the degradation of marriage and unbridled sensual enjoyment. Men supposed to be good thinkers in Europe call marriage a superstition, and would not mind a man misbehaving with his sister if he felt so inclined. This is not merely going to the other extreme but a direct consequence of the train of thought underlying birth control. It may be that marriage which is supposed to be good for man may really be bad. But I cannot go beyond the bare admission of such a possibility for the sake of argument. Such ideas based on so-called ethics and science fill me with horror. They arise from false pity, impatience and the passing experience of individuals, but I wish we were not contaminated by them. Again, birth control has no place in India, situated as we are. Millions are physically and mentally enfeebled, and if sex is given a loose rein, it would constitute an impassable bar to progress. Some who resort to artificial birth control are really as good as impotent. Just have a look at newspaper advertisements. The articles collected in *Self-restraint v. Self-indulgence* were written as an answer to the letters of impotent students and teachers received every week. Our young men must imbibe the lesson of self-control even at the cost

of doing violence to themselves. Girls too are in a curious condition. What a strange thing it is that a fifteen-year-old weakly girl like....born and bred in the Ashram expresses a desire to marry! Why should such young people be troubled by rising passion? But the whole atmosphere in our country is corrupt. Ideas of sensuality are thrust upon boys and girls from their very childhood. I would be the last person to teach them the "duty" of yielding to their animal instincts.'

A wire from Devadas who has been suffering from mild enteric fever for the last 12 days was received yesterday: 'The maximum temperature was 102°, and has now gone below 100°. The climate of Gorakhpur is very bad. I have not heard from you for some time.' Bapu remarked that Devadas had referred to the climate in the expectation that we should try to get him transferred from Gorakhpur.

The Sardar suggested that he should certainly be transferred to some place with a better climate.

Bapu said, 'Yes, but we must apply for the transfer ourselves, if we want it, and I have no mind to do so. Harilal was in the worst prison in South Africa, but his transfer was arranged by him himself and not by me.'

The Sardar said, 'But we are not prisoners here. The circumstances in India are different. Let us apply by all means.'

Bapu yielded after all and wired to Hailey that his son was kept companionless in a notoriously bad place without any reason, and was down with fever; he should therefore be transferred to Dehra Dun or else to Yeravda.

June 19, 1932

The eleventh chapter of the Gita was recited today as part of the morning prayer. When it was over Bapu said, 'I am reminded of the day when Mr. Baker took me to the Wellington Convention in order to convert me. He would always be holding discussions with me. I would ask him to awaken faith in me, and said I was willing to subject myself to any influence he chose. Thereupon he

asked me to go to the Convention, where I would meet able men who could convince me of the truth of Christianity. The whole compartment was occupied by white men and I had confined myself to an upper berth. They invited me to descend and have a look at the glorious scenery visible from the carriage window and at the rising sun, but in vain. I was reciting the eleventh chapter at the time. Baker asked me what I was reading. "The Gita," I replied. He must have thought me a fool not to read the Bible instead. But what could he do? He had no intention of coercing me. There was a special prayer for me at the Convention. But I came back the same as I had gone.'

A clerk in a cloth merchant's shop wrote to Bapu saying that trade was impossible for them without telling lies. What was he to do? He could not think of any other occupation suitable for himself. To him Bapu wrote:

'The man of truth is he who will tell and practise the truth, no matter in what circumstances he is placed. No one is bound to tell lies whether in trade or in service. But if we are compelled to tell a lie anywhere, we must not accept such work and not mind even if we starve without it.'

Among our many women helpers in England was Lauri Sawyer. She had suffered from cancer first and then from tuberculosis, but I have seen few girls so cheerful and bright as she was. Horace suggested that as she was not likely to live very much longer Bapu should write her a letter. He therefore at once wrote to her as follows:

'My dear Lauri,

Prof. Horace Alexander reminds me of your existence and tells me how weak you are. Of course I remember you perfectly. Weak in body you may be, but the very first time I met you I saw how strong you were in will. And if God wants more service from you in your present existence, He will give you sufficient strength of body. For those who have faith in God, life and death are alike.

Ours is to serve till the last breath. Do write to me when you can. Love from Mahadev.

Yours, Bapu

I write nothing about ourselves as you must know all there is to know.'

A child asked Bapu how cleaning pots and pans and sanitary conveniences could count as service. To him Bapu replied: 'People generally do not like to perform these tasks, and therefore they are assigned to particular classes of society. This is a bad arrangement. Therefore whoever does such work in a philanthropic spirit renders useful service.'

A girl wished that she had been born a cat as Bapu was taking so much interest in the jail cat and her kittens. To her Bapu wrote: 'I fondle children as much as kittens. The cat is not a rational animal as we are, and therefore it is not a good thing to be born a cat.'

To Punjabhai who looks upon Bapu as an incarnation of God Bapu wrote: 'You write well indeed. You have lived a most useful life. Whoever delights in doing good to others till the last moment of his life has fulfilled his life's purpose. Narandas informs me that you had fallen asleep again. Proceeding in this manner you will one day sleep never to wake again. Welcome such sleep when it comes for you.'

To some one who is given to too much reading of religious books and too much thinking, Bapu wrote: 'You will be surprised to find me recommending that you should for the present stop reading even the Gita and Raichandbhai's books. Think over the Gita portion and hymn sung as part of the prayer. You will find this restraint difficult, but you will see that it does you good. Reading seems to be your occupation at present, but when you are free, take up any useful activity you like. Do not give way to day-dreaming. That is the teaching implied in "one step enough for me." We should give up whatever comes to hang round our necks like a millstone. But you may certainly read newspapers.'

A girl asked how a person could ever be eager to admit a fault. Would he not be ashamed of doing so? Still why did Bapu say that he should not be so ashamed? To her Bapu replied: 'A fault is a bad thing; therefore we should be ashamed of it. But to admit and ask pardon for a fault is a good thing; therefore we should not feel shame in doing so. To ask pardon for a fault implies a determination not to default any more. Is such determination something to be ashamed of? There can be no comparison between truth and non-violence. But if such comparison must be instituted, I would say that truth is superior even to non-violence. For untruth is tantamount to violence. The lover of truth is bound to make a discovery of non-violence sooner or later.'

Two men, Jivaram Kalyanji Kothari and Jethalal Govindji are worshipping God as the poor in His very sanctuary. Jivaram is serving in Orissa afflicted as it is with ignorance, idleness and poverty, and Jethalal in Anantapur, a village in Madhya Pradesh, whereabouts there are a hundred thousand people to whom an anna a day provides substantial relief and who cannot afford to purchase a spinning-wheel costing only six annas. How difficult it must be to work in the midst of such a population! But Jethalal has been working there diligently for the last three years. He sent a report of his work; therefore Bapu wrote to him a long letter of appreciation, full of suggestions regarding it. In Bihar people have neither enough food to eat nor clothes to wear; therefore there was no difficulty in reviving the spinning wheel among them. This work in Bihar is not in Bapu's opinion a scientific experiment in the sense in which Jethalal's work is. To him Bapu wrote: 'I consider yours to be a scientific experiment, and therefore I have been watching you all along, and have desired to follow your work in full detail. You are a seasoned worker and will encounter many more difficulties in the future. This is the usual pattern of every great work: once in a while we feel that the line is now clear and we shall be able to make rapid

progress. We then relax a little, but all at once we notice a deep ditch in front of us. Therefore you must settle there permanently. The one thing needful is infinite patience with self-confidence at the root of it. Self-confidence means an unflinching faith in one's work. Once this faith is acquired, there is no need to be anxious about the numerous errors we are unconsciously bound to commit from time to time. We must not permit ourselves to be paralysed by the fear that we are perhaps on the wrong path. I consider your experiment to be scientific. It is not perfectly scientific now; but your work shares in all the characteristics of a scientific experiment, and you have the patience needed in carrying it out. I had noticed one defect in you before, but I think that you have remedied it intelligently. Or perhaps your devotion to truth has helped you to remedy it without being conscious of it. That defect was this: you were satisfied with incomplete data and drew hasty conclusions from them. But this is no longer the case. A scientific experimenter has profound confidence in himself and is therefore never downhearted. At the same time he is so humble that he is never satisfied with his own work, and is not guilty of drawing hasty conclusions. On the other hand he measures his progress off and on and declares emphatically that the result of x can be y only. Our workers are generally lacking in this humility of the real man of science. I was therefore not surprised when I found that you were not an exception to this rule. But I do believe that you have the power of persevering till the end. I therefore gently drew your attention to this defect many years ago. In order to succeed you must first collect a band of fellow-workers around you. They are bound to be gradually attracted to you in view of the work you are doing. In order to attract them you must cultivate the quality of tolerance springing from generosity. Co-workers cannot do everything that we are doing or we want them to do. But if they are well-intentioned and diligent, we should not despise their assistance. Only thus can we hope to build up a team. In the absence of such

an accommodating spirit some of us have to plough a lonely furrow.

'One thing more about your work. You should cultivate a desire to take tips even from those who are working on other lines. It is a mistake to suppose that a scientific experiment can be performed in one particular manner, and those who fall into such error stand to lose a good deal. We for ourselves may follow a method which we think to be right or perfect, but if others do not recognize its perfection or notice defects in it, we should let them go their own way. We thus increase our power of comprehension.

'I cannot say anything about your present method of work. As I am partial to you, it seems to be all right from here. But if I am able to see you actually at work, it is possible that many ideas would occur to me and I would place them before you for consideration. I cannot picture your work accurately from this distance. It would therefore be an impertinence to offer any suggestions.'

Jivaram Kothari's case is still more exceptional. He gave a donation of a lakh of rupees in 1922 and thus incurred the enmity of his uncle. He then gave up business at the age of 50, took a vow of service and has buried himself with his wife in Orissa where even Chhaganlal Gandhi was bored to death, fell ill and could not stay any longer. He is working in full faith, and is attracting others to his own field.

As I think of these two workers, I am reminded of a passage from Romain Rolland :

'In speaking of classes among workers, it is small matter for wonder that Vivekanand places first, not the illustrious, those crowned with the halo of glory and veneration, not even the Christs and Buddhas ; but rather the nameless, the silent ones — the unknown soldiers. The page is a striking one, not easily forgotten when read : " The great men in the world have passed away unknown. The Buddhas and Christs that we know are but secondrate heroes in comparison with the greatest men of whom the world knows nothing. Silently they live and silently they

pass away, and in time their thoughts find expression in Buddhas or Christs and it is these latter that become known to us. They leave their ideas to the world; they put forth no claim for themselves and establish no schools or systems in their name. Their whole nature shrinks from such a thing. They are the Sattvikas who can never make any stir but only melt down in love.....The highest men are calm, silent, unknown. They are the men who really know the power of thought; they are sure that even if they go into a cave and close the door and simply think five true thoughts and then pass away, these five thoughts of theirs will live throughout eternity."'

JUNE 20, 1932

A letter from Princess Aristarchi describing her difficulties:

'I always look forward with joy for the mail day to come round again when I may write to you. It is such a great help and means to me more than I can express in words. The fact of knowing you lit up my whole path, giving me strength to bear all the present difficulties. It is with financial worries I have now to cope with. Please to pray for me, Mahatmaji, that God might give me the necessary courage and clear sight, especially for my mother's sake, who is over 80 years old. I feel it is an ordeal to pass, and that God will lead me through, and I offer it to Him as an act of self-purification that it may be counted for your sake. All my thoughts and prayers surround you with incessant devotion and faith for brighter days. God ever keep you and bless you, dear Mahatmaji,

O'er moor and fen, over crag and torrent
Till the night is gone.

With deepest and faithful affection,
Efy Aristarchi'

To her Bapu replied as follows:

'I continue to receive your kind messages. The latest brings the news of your financial worries. My prayers are certainly with you. Those who walk in the fear of God do

not fear financial or any other losses. These often come to the God-fearing as blessings in disguise. May this trouble be so with you. Your faith and fortitude should cheer your aged mother.

'You know the next part of the beautiful verse you have * quoted from an Upanishad. It § means: "Enjoy the world by renouncing it." How apposite!'

Abbas Tyabji is very unhappy that he has been unable to court imprisonment. So he writes:

'Need I say there is hardly a minute of my conscious hours when I am not thinking of you and your companions and wondering how much I am disappointing you?'

But Bapu reassured him:

'You can't disappoint me even if you try. You may not therefore allow such a thought to depress you.'

Raihana is not keeping well; to her Bapu wrote:

'Who can tell whether it is good to be well or to be ill? You have heard the story of Nala and Damayanti. Nala was a very handsome man; in order to save him God ordered the snake Karkotak to bite and disfigure him. When he bit Nala, the king was deeply annoyed, but later on he came to know that the snake-bite was a gift from God. I am sure yours is a case of the same kind. Therefore by all means take the necessary treatment, but never care whether you are well or ill. You must sing and dance with joy in all conditions, and wait upon mother. But enough of lecturing. You must wear a smile over your face, no matter what comes to pass. If you have dedicated your all at the feet of God, your body is His, not yours. The disease afflicts Him, not you. Where then is room for distress? I will be hard put to it to understand the Urdu poem you have copied out for me in the Gujarati script. You imagine that you have a clever pupil in me, but you will soon be disillusioned. If I had been clever, I would not have sought a teacher at all and that too in you of all persons. There-

* ईशावास्यमिदं सर्वं यत्किञ्च जगत्यां जगत्। 'Everything in this universe is pervaded by God.' *Ed.*

§ तेन त्यक्तेन भुञ्जीथाः। *Ed.*

fore never mind. I am as dull as you are; or you are as dull as I. Who can say whether you have selected me as a pupil or I have appointed you my teacher?'

The Sardar was angry as well as I was, on reading Anandshankar Dhruva's editorial note in the Phalgun issue of *Vasant*: 'How could he compare our struggle with the world-war? Why does he offer unsolicited advice, talking of our poverty and other things and saying that in war none of the two parties attains its object?' But Bapu said, 'That is not so. He points out that we are losing sight of *ahimsa*, and thus our struggle is assuming the shape of ordinary warfare. And I too believe that we are committing mistakes. Whoever thought of burning letter-boxes? It is senseless destruction of valuable national property.' I observed, 'But his subsequent observations are unqualified. He says, "If our struggle lasts long, it will only do immense harm to both parties. We cannot find in this war the possibility of any of the two parties attaining their objective." He has thus condemned our struggle out of hand.' Bapu replied, 'No, no. His condemnation applies only to our lapse from *ahimsa*.' 'In that case,' I said, 'he should have mentioned specific cases in which such lapses have occurred.' 'True,' said Bapu. 'But that is beyond his powers. Like Natarajan he is in the habit of assuming the role of a judge. Both are rationalists; their heart follows their reason at a distance. But I do not mind their becoming judges. In fact every journalist does so. But he must not therefore assume that each of the two parties must be partly right. He should examine the cases of both in a dispassionate spirit and then if he finds that one of the two has put up a false case or is in the wrong, he should not hesitate to say so. It is beyond Anandshankar's capacity to detail our credits. He only sets forth the debits and declares that they cancel the credits.'

From a letter to the Sardar I find that his ninety-year old mother is still working in the kitchen. Kashibhai brings the various ingredients before her, and the old lady cooks *dal*, rice and vegetable. This is indeed a miracle. Women would perhaps have objected vigorously if ten years ago

some one had proposed to take cooking off their hands. But nowadays even ordinary illiterate women thirty years old dislike cooking.

JUNE 21, 1932

The Superintendent said that some political prisoners complained to the members of the Committee who visited jail yesterday that he had not visited their yard after the 13th, although in fact he went there every other day. He intended to punish these prisoners for telling a lie. The Sardar's comment on this was: 'He wants every one to feel that he is Superintendent. Who can say that he is telling the truth? We do not know what those prisoners have got to say on their own behalf.' Bapu remarked that the Sardar would have his eyes opened if he was Superintendent himself. Similarly Premabehn writes that Bapu put her to shame by setting forth before her the Superintendent's case as a reply to her ungenerous criticism, and yesterday he stood up for Anandshankarbhai.

Hanumanprasad Poddar wrote to say that he had * put that question to Bapu with a view to publication in *Kalyan*. To him Bapu wrote a second letter:

'It is convenient for me to answer questions on spiritual problems if I have some individual in view, but it is troublesome to write for the press. Now that I know that the questions were asked with a view to publication of the answers in the press, this knowledge paralyses my intellect. Not that things written for the press do not do some good to the people. I only give you an idea of my mental disposition. I have thus often written for *Young India* which was for me no newspaper but a weekly letter to friends. And spiritual topics discussed in *Young India* or *Navajivan* nearly always dealt with some person or other. There is a reason for this. I am not a student of scripture. I do exercise my intellect, but what I say or write springs not from the head but from the heart. And the heart is incapable of producing an essay.'

*See page 125, supra. *Ed.*

In his previous letter Bapu had said that realization does not proceed from a knowledge of how some one else attained it but from humble faith. Poddar asked for an explanation of 'humble faith.' Bapu replied: 'I used that phrase from helplessness. It does not fully express my meaning. The point is that faith should not be undiscriminating or blind. For instance as regards some question which can be solved by human intelligence some one may say, "I do not care what the intellect has got to say in the matter; I will hold a particular belief from faith;" his faith is not characterized by humility. It is for the human intellect to decide whether the earth is round or flat. Yet if some one says he has full faith that it is flat, his faith is not coupled with humility.'

The distinction drawn above applies for instance to Bapu's articles and the essays written by Kaka Kalelkar and others. And when Rolland says that Bapu is not an 'intellectual,' he without being fully conscious of it means to say the same thing as Bapu does in this letter.

A co-worker of Muriel Lester asked why we crave to see and enjoy beautiful things. To her Bapu wrote:

'A craving for things of beauty is perfectly natural. Only there is no absolute standard of beauty. I have therefore come to think that the craving is not to be satisfied, but that from the craving for things outside of us, we must learn to see beauty from within. And when we do that, a whole vista of beauty is opened out to us and the love of appropriation vanishes. I have expressed myself clumsily but I hope you follow what I mean.'

Then again she asked what is the purpose of life. On this point Bapu wrote:

"The purpose of life is undoubtedly to know oneself. We cannot do it unless we learn to identify ourselves with all that lives. The sum-total of that life is God. Hence the necessity of realizing God living within every one of us. The instrument of this knowledge is boundless selfless service."

Rolland writes that Vivekanand started the movement for the removal of untouchability and Gandhiji carried it

on after him. His standpoint is that of a historian. Vivekanand and Dayanand condemned untouchability; it is therefore historically true that Bapu inherited their attitude to that gigantic evil. But when I asked him if he knew anything about these two men's views when he thought of fighting against untouchability, he said: 'I have not yet read anything from Vivekanand's pen except his *Rajayoga*. I knew that Dayanand had founded the Aryasamaj, but I was not aware that he had thought of uplift of Harijans. Service of Harijans is an original idea with me.' I suggested that perhaps the atmosphere in South Africa and his work in that country had brought that question prominently to his notice, and he thus conceived the idea of taking up anti-untouchability work. Bapu replied, 'You are right. The idea did occur to me in South Africa and in the South African atmosphere.' I asked Bapu if he knew that the word *Daridranarayan* (God incarnated as the poor) was coined by Vivekanand. He replied, 'No. I heard it first from Chittaranjan Das, and I thought it was his. Only later on did I come to know that it was Vivekanand's.'

JUNE 22, 1932

Letter from Mirabehn. She very much liked Bapu's description of life as * preparation for death, and quoted Shakespeare:

> Cowards die many times before their deaths,
> The valiant only taste of death but once.

She thought these lines did not convey Bapu's idea. So he wrote to her:

'I do not suppose you have noticed that "the valiant only taste of death but once" has a deeper meaning conveying the perfect truth according to the Hindu conception of salvation. It means freedom from the wheel of birth and death. If the word valiant may be taken to mean those who are strong in their search after God, they die but once, for they need not be reborn and put on the mortal coil.'

* *Bapu's Letters to Mira,* letter 158, page 195. *Ed.*

I thought the 'valiant' were those who stuck to their vows unto death and the cowards such people as broke them from time to time; the law-breakers die every time that they break the law, but the valiant die only once. Life is also conceived as preparation for death in Kabir's hymn:

कर ले सिंगार, चतुर अलबेली,
साजनके घर जाना होगा ।
माटी ओढावन, माटी बिछावन,
माटीसे मिल जाना होगा ।
न्हा ले, धो ले, शीस गुंथा ले,
फिर वहाँसे नहीं आना होगा ।

He calls upon the human soul to prepare for death before it comes. One whose whole life has not been preparation for death would hardly think of preparing for it at the last moment. So it all comes to the same thing.

JUNE 23, 1932

In a letter to Tilakam written yesterday Bapu said, 'She (Mirabehn) is a pure soul with an infinite capacity for self-sacrifice.'

Bapu wrote a letter to Devadas in which, after referring to Harilal's antics, he said, 'There are many such other pitiful creatures in the world. Should I not feel for them even as for Harilal? They all behave according to their lights, but will come round at last if we are true to ourselves. I consider myself largely responsible for Harilal's present plight. I was enveloped in darkness in the days before he was born, and voluptuous when he was a child. I was not addicted to drink, a defect which has now been supplied by him. I enjoyed myself in one woman's company; he seeks that of many. The difference is one of degree, not of kind. I must therefore atone for his sins. Atonement means self-purification, which is proceeding at a snail's pace.'

The husband of a remarried widow died, and I wondered if she would contract a third marriage. The

Sardar said no one would be willing to enter into partnership with her in view of her record, and being pretty old, she would not perhaps herself wish to marry once again. Bapu said, 'I remember the remarriage of a sixtyfour-year-old woman, Mrs O. After the happy event she wrote to me, "I am now Mrs P, not Mrs O." She married only to get a companion.' I said, 'Goethe at 73 offered his hand in marriage to an eighteen-year-old girl. The offer was rejected by her parents who were deeply shocked at it.' The Sardar said that if he had been in their place he would have treated Goethe's skin with a red-hot pair of tongs; as the poet's brain had been softened by age, it would not respond to any other treatment.

In a letter to Premabehn Bapu dealt with a number of important subjects:

'In your case I have not made an exception to the general rule that no one may take fish in the Ashram. Codliver oil is unfit to be taken, but its use in the Ashram has not been objected to. Meat and fish as such are forbidden food so far as the Ashram in general is concerned, but exceptions have been made, as in the case of Imamsaheb who was free to take them outside Ashram limits. Take Narandas for instance who has abstained from meat all his life. But if he was seriously ill and wished to save his life by taking meat, I would not come in his way. On the other hand in the case of a child the decision would rest with me; I would therefore let it die but not give it meat. Ba has passed through such an ordeal, as you can see for yourself in the *Autobiography*.* It was a glorious occasion for her as well as for me. I would never insist on your taking fish. I would let you die without it if you are ready. One may eat fish and live, but he lives only to die. Rules are meant only for those who would observe them at any cost. It is our clear duty to give up the milk of all animals, but I cannot discharge it myself. Rules may be observed by a man himself, but he must not impose them on others.

* Part IV, chapter XXVIII, p. 394 ff. in 1948 edition. *Ed.*

'As regards children's curiosity about the facts of life, we should tell them if we know and admit our ignorance if we do not. If it is something that must not be told, we should check them and ask them not to put such questions even to any one else. We must never put them off. They know more things than we imagine. If they do not know and if we refuse to tell them, they try to acquire the knowledge in a questionable manner. But if it has to be withheld from them, we must take such risk. If they ask us about the sexual act, we must not tell them.

'If children watch the behaviour of birds, and want to know, I would tell them and take the opportunity to teach them a lesson in *brahmacharya* (chastity). I would emphasize the distinction between men and beasts or birds. If men and women behave like beasts, they are only beasts in human shape. This is not vituperation but a bare statement of facts. We are endowed with human shape and reason in order that we may subdue the beast within.

'To a girl who has reached the age of puberty I would tell everything about it. If a younger girl asks about it, I would explain it to her according to her mental capacity.

'Boys and girls cannot remain innocent for all time, no matter how hard we try. Therefore it is advisable to tell them the facts of life at a certain age. If this knowledge leads any of them to misbehave themselves, we must not mind. As a matter of fact, such knowledge ought to strengthen one's will to chastity. That is my own experience at any rate.

'Some acquire this knowledge to feed the animal passion; others come to know in the natural course of things; still others equip themselves with information in order to control passion and help others to do so.

'This knowledge may be imparted only by those who are fit to do it. You should aspire after such fitness. You must have the confidence in yourself that if you tell the girls, you will tell them in such a way that their minds will not be adversely affected. You should be aware that you are telling them with a view to self-control. If it is possible for you to be moved by passion yourself, you

should see that you are not so moved when you are telling them.

'Indulgence lies at the root of family life. Hinduism as well as other religions has tried to bring in self-restraint.

'If the husband is a god, the wife also is a goddess. She is not a slave, but a friend and companion with equal rights. Each is a teacher (*guru*) for the other.

'A daughter's share must be equal to that of a son.

'The husband's earnings are the joint property of husband and wife, as he makes money by her assistance if only as a cook.

'If a husband is unjust to his wife, she has the right to live separately.

'Both have equal rights to the children. Each would forfeit these rights after they have grown up, and even before that if he or she is unfit for them.

'In short, I admit no distinction between man and woman except such as has been made by nature and can be seen with human eyes.

'I have the fullest confidence in Narandas. If he says that he is at peace with himself, I am not prepared to believe that he is not. I have put him on his guard but would not care to criticize him from this distance. He has the ability to work without attachment. A detached worker is capable of working very much harder than one who is attached. It seems as if he has nothing to do, and he is the last to be attacked by fatigue. As a matter of fact he should be above fatigue, but that is only the ideal. Unlike me, you are there on the spot. Therefore if you think that Narandas is deceiving himself, you should certainly warn him. If he disregards your warning, you should drop the matter so long as you consider him a Satyagrahi. We are often deceived by our eyes. Looking at your face I may feel that you are sad; but if you say that you are not, I must take you at your word. It would be a different thing if I am afraid or if I suspect that you would hide your real feelings from me. In that case it would be no use for me to ask you at all; and I must tap other sources of information. But Ashram life can only be lived in that

manner. Truth lies at its very root. Therefore one may not deceive others even with the best of intentions.'

In his letter to Mirabehn Bapu gave some details about his health. The Superintendent said that these details should be scored out. Bapu did not score them out but added these words, 'Nothing in this letter is meant for publication.' But the Superintendent said that would not do. Another letter should be written out. Jail rules laid it down that detailed information about health could not be given in prisoners' letters. And as Government was watching Mirabehn, a copy of the letter would certainly be sent to them.

The Sardar asked the Superintendent if a young prisoner had died a few days ago. He coolly replied, 'Yes.' Bapu asked how old he was. The Major said he did not know. The Sardar asked what had been wrong with him. The Major replied that he died of jaundice. He was in hospital for two days and then died. He said this and we heard it as if nothing in particular had happened.

June 24, 1932

Bapu asked the Superintendent if there was a rule that no information about health could be given in prisoners' letters. He replied, 'Yes. The public would imagine all manner of things about big people like you and begin to worry. Lady Thakarsi heard about your indisposition and came here to make inquiries. If the news is out that you had loose bowels, quite a lot of people will be here to make sure if it is true.' The Sardar remarked Government should issue an ordinance that no one should inquire after Gandhiji's health. Bapu said he wished to know if it was a general rule or a special rule applicable only to him. He would not mind if it was a special rule directed against himself. But if it was a general rule applicable to all prisoners, he would be compelled to fight against it. The Major said, 'The rule is there, but why fight for such a trivial thing?' Bapu observed that there were many such things. And if he himself gave the information, there would be an end of false rumours. The Major said, 'We

jail authorities give true information, and send a wire if a prisoner is dangerously ill.' Bapu said, 'So you will do nothing until the illness becomes dangerous?' The Sardar remarked relatives were to be informed only when those in charge were afraid that the prisoner would die. This made the Superintendent angry.

I said to Bapu, 'I was very angry to find how indifferent the Superintendent was as regards the boy's death in jail.' Bapu observed men tended to become callous in service. I told Bapu about an officer in another jail who was a bad fellow, but took care of sick prisoners, felt for them, and talked about them every day. Bapu said that was because he was addicted to drink. Drink addicts have tender feelings. I wondered how; the Sardar advised me not to take to drink in order to soften the heart. 'In Tolstoy's story', said Bapu, 'the man drinks but still has not the courage to murder his victim; he has some vestige of feeling left. He then smokes a cigar, which blunts his sensibilities. A man is capable of anything when once his intellect is clouded.'

While we were talking like this, the Superintendent came back, this time in company with Doyle, and Thomas the Home Member. Doyle introduced Thomas to Bapu. Thomas took a chair and sat near Bapu. He had never met him before and said he had come not in his official capacity, but only to make Bapu's acquaintance. Bapu said that he was delighted to meet him. He then inquired after Bapu's health and climate of the prison and asked if he had enough books to read. Referring to his Urdu studies, Bapu remarked that the books published by the Lahore *Anjuman* had been a revelation for him. Thomas asked if there were such books in other languages too. Bapu replied he did not know. There were none so bad in Gujarati at any rate. Thomas asked if they dealt only with the life of the Prophet of Islam. Bapu replied, 'No. They deal at length with Islam in general, and I read them in order to understand the Muslim mind.' Thomas then asked if Bapu was writing anything. 'Yes,' replied Bapu. 'I am writing a history of the Ashram.' Thomas thought in that case

Bapu must be obliged to consult quite a number of documents and papers. 'No,' replied Bapu. 'I wrote the *Autobiography* and *Satyagraha in South Africa* without having any papers before me.' 'All from memory?' asked Thomas. 'Yes,' replied Bapu. 'And after comparing them with the original documents, it was found that in no material particular was there any slip. It is easy to write the history of the Ashram, as it is being written more from the ethical than the historical point of view. I have to trace the evolution of all the observances and rules.' Thomas was astonished to find Bapu writing without reference books at hand. Then the question of interviews cropped up. 'You don't see Mrs Naidu,' said Thomas. 'No,' said Bapu. 'I am not permitted to see her.' Government's refusal to let Mirabehn see Bapu was the next topic of conversation. Thomas asked why Bapu had stopped seeing others and thus punished himself. Bapu said he should not see any one else if he could not see her on account of the work she was doing. Thomas said Government would not object to her seeing Bapu if she stopped sending dispatches to England. Bapu said that was impossible, but Government might have a look at them if they wished. Thomas asked what was the use of seeing them after they had done the mischief they were capable of doing. Bapu suggested that Government might issue a contradiction and if it was convincing, Mirabehn would correct herself. Thomas asked what the correction was worth after the mischief had been done. Bapu remarked Government also was sometimes guilty of giving false information. There was always such a possibility in human affairs. 'Yes,' said Thomas. 'But we have to prevent the dissemination of inaccurate news.' Bapu suggested that if Government wished, he would arrange that a copy of her dispatches was simultaneously made available to Government. But he could not agree to their being censored. Government should be thankful that they had honourable opponents to deal with. Thomas objected that not all of them were honourable. 'But Mira,' said Bapu, 'is in the front rank of our honourable workers. She is incapable of

consciously telling an untruth.' 'May be,' said Thomas. 'But all women are credulous.' 'Mira is not,' said Bapu. 'But I can certainly arrange that she sends you copies of her news bulletins.' Thomas broached the subject of provincial autonomy. Bapu then observed that there was a difference between his conception of provincial autonomy and provincial autonomy as generally understood. According to him the provinces should have full powers in everything including the army, *abkari* (excise) and so forth. The Central Government could exercise a moral check but nothing more. He had told this to Sir Samuel Hoare, who granted his point and never claimed that he (Gandhi) would be satisfied with provincial autonomy. 'But provincial autonomy as conceived by you,' said Thomas, 'is a mere utopia. Is not moral sanction essential?' 'Yes,' agreed Gandhiji. 'But even the Central Government will be manned by representatives sent by the provinces, who should take it that provinces do no wrong. In England everything is supposed to be done with the moral authority of the king. That is a legal fiction and there would be a similar fiction in India. I would this very moment accept such provincial autonomy if it is offered. Sapru, Shastri and even some Congressmen may not approve of my idea of provincial autonomy, but that is what I at any rate want.' Thomas replied that was utopia pure and simple, and Bapu would have to wait for it indefinitely. Bapu observed that he was prepared to wait as long as necessary. Thomas asked why he should not accept half a loaf which was being offered now. Bapu replied he certainly would if he was sure that it was a loaf. But how could he accept a stone instead? He would rather bide his time and wait for real bread.

Major Doyle advised Bapu to use the denture at all times, for if once the gums are accustomed to chew food, they do not take kindly to the denture.

Thomas shook hands with the Sardar and with me as he left. He talked to me about the spinning wheel, and asked if 40 yards of yarn would be enough for a coat. I replied that 18,000 yards would be needed for one *dhoti*.

He was surprised at this and said that in that case I would have to spin 18 days in order to get yarn enough for a *dhoti*. That was very uneconomical. I said spinning was to be only a spare-time occupation. He then asked if I did not find spinning monotonous. 'No,' I replied. 'It serves as relaxation. The mind is sick of reading and writing all day long and is thus diverted and rested by spinning.' He questioned how mechanical work could be restful. The mind would get rest only if we played bridge for instance. Poor Thomas had no idea that in bridge he might gain or lose a thousand rupees, but he would not be able to place a single pie in the poor man's purse.

Bapu met Morar Patel of Syadla who sent a message to the Sardar that Bardoli would not disgrace herself. Some at any rate out of those who had joined the movement would fight unto death. Dr Phatak of Satara said they were given a lot of grain to grind, so that they had to be continuously at work from 7 a.m. to 3 p.m.

When these fellow prisoners meet Bapu, he sits on the ground like them, as they are not offered chairs to sit on.

When we were talking about Abbas Tyebji Bapu reminisced about him during the Panjab Disturbances inquiry: 'He was almost at death's door, called for me and made a will. But he was on his feet and at work in a couple of days. And he would never think of going back home. He said he would not go, but they should call Mrs Tyebji to keep him company in the Panjab.'

Talking about provincial autonomy Bapu said, 'Only provincial autonomy will pave the way for national Swaraj. Indeed such autonomy is real Swaraj. Without it federation will be a snare and a delusion. Federation can never bring about unity in the country. Government is aware of this and therefore talks of federation. Sapru, Shastri and Jayakar are afraid of the Musalmans; they therefore insist upon a strong central government. Strong centre for me is located in the provinces, which would have their own army according to their need and manage all affairs in their own way. The result would be that development

in each province would mean development all round, or perhaps the provinces would fight among themselves. The centre today is an all-devouring octopus. Federation such as demanded by the moderates and offered by the British would make an end of the provinces. It is municipal autonomy as the Sardar calls it. My conception is nearer to the states in America and to the city states in Switzerland. It is possible that even many Congressmen will not here agree with me. But never mind, as they will understand the real position by and by. If you would have an idea of the evils arising from a strong centre, just have a look at the history of Indian currency. There was a profit of 35 crores of rupees from the mint ; this huge sum is carried into and swallowed up in the Reserves.'

JUNE 25, 1932

This week Bapu disposed of the Ashram post today only being Saturday. Fewer letters are received from the Ashram as well as from outsiders.

The Superintendent gave us an instance of how things are managed in Government departments. Bapu wrote a letter to Percy Bartlett in May. The Superintendent forwarded it to the Government of Bombay as he thought it was rather important. From Bombay they sent it to the Government of India who in their turn sent it to India Office. India Office sent it to Bartlett only in June. It has been published with a covering letter from the Archbishop of York, Lindsay, Younghusband and Gilbert Murray and thus become a matter of public discussion. The Government of Bombay are now awake and have asked the Superintendent at what time Gandhiji had written this letter, and how he had passed it. The Superintendent was happy, thinking of the procedure he had followed. He obtained from me a copy of the letter and said he would write that he had also kept a copy of it.

The Superintendent informed me that he had also been asked questions about the letter to Birla, though there was nothing special about it. It seems Government has grown rather intolerant of letters sent out from here,

and that is perhaps why fewer letters have been handed to us this week.

Sharada wrote how a peacock had died in the Ashram, and was as ugly in death as he had been handsome in life. To her Bapu wrote: 'We are in the same boat as the peacock. We do not even like to see people when they have died, however fair-faced they have been in life, and burn them. Therefore we should not be attached to the body.'

Sharada also asked why a sister who serves mankind in the same way as her brother could not be called his *sahadharmacharini*. Bapu replied she could not be so called, because that noun has now come to mean wife. Again when a sister married she no longer lived with (*saha*) her brother.

In another letter he wrote: 'The uses of temples and *choras* (public halls in villages) are well known. People sing devotional songs, and hold meetings there. That has been the reason for their existence all along.

'The question whether image-worship is or is not necessary does not arise, for it has been and will be there all along. Human beings can only be image-worshippers.

'It is possible that some change is necessary in the modes of worship in Vaishnav temples. God is everywhere and therefore in the image also. It is impossible to do away with image-worship.'

A paragraph from another letter: '*Anasakti* certainly means non-attachment to self and to one's own kith and kin, as well as attachment to *param*, that is Truth or God, so much so that one is absorbed or melts in Him. People do not understand this double meaning and hence give way to listlessness and despair.'

From a letter to his daughter-in-law: 'If you boil the oil dropped into the child's ear with a little garlic, it will become more efficacious'

JUNE 26, 1932

Met Cresswell by accident while I was going to call Alphonzo. He is sorry he cannot see us. He suspects this

ban is perhaps due to a letter to the press which he wrote as regards political prisoners. He has been writing to us to let him know if he could do anything for us, send fruit or books. But his letters are not delivered.

Some Englishman contributes a good series of articles to the *Times of India Illustrated Weekly* on the women of India. One of these dealt with Durgavati, the Mahoba princess. I read it to Bapu who liked it too. Natarajan is writing good articles on franchise. He takes the same line as Bapu as regards indirect adult franchise.

There is an interesting story about Lord Grey in *The Times*. Sir James Barrie celebrated his (Grey's) 70th birthday at his own place. Grey has retired from politics and rests at Falloden in the company of birds. Sir James made a speech and said he asked his own canary if they should celebrate Grey's birthday. The canary knew Grey at once and said, 'Celebrate it by all means, but do call us all to meet him.' All the birds were accordingly present at the celebration. We in India do not take such interest in birds, or flowers or vegetation, or animals. The modern votary of *ahimsa* is a stranger to the sense of kinship which men in Kalidas's time felt with the natural objects by which they were surrounded. On the other hand many Westerners who do not set much store by *ahimsa* feel themselves to be one with external nature. When Muriel in her letters describes the advent of spring, she refers to the wealth of flowers scattered in hedges, gardens and meadows. Miss Privat writes she is in love with every vegetable planted in her backyard. But we?

As regards the distinction made by Hindus between ordinary food and fast foods (*phalahara*) Bapu wrote to Rameshvardas:

'The distinction is false. From the standpoint of both physical and spiritual health, daily foods are in certain circumstances preferable to fast foods. Groundnuts, though they are a fast food, cannot be taken in ill-health, while even sick persons can take a little rice which is daily food. One who is practising self-restraint may somehow manage with rice, but he must generally avoid groundnuts. *Pedas*

(dried milk and sugar) are as good as poison for a person like you. It would be better if in the evening you take some grapes, oranges, pomegranates or other juicy fruit instead of bread, rice, *dal* and vegetable. Otherwise look on both as daily food. The distinction between daily and fast food seems to have been drawn by some people who, being unable to control the palate, would deceive God as well as themselves. I write from experience, as I was born in a *Vaishnav* family.'

June 27, 1932

Today's spinning tired me out. Either the slivers are not good enough for 50s or perhaps I have not still attained the requisite skill. My speed is low, and the thread breaks off and on, so that I take nearly 5 hours to spin 840 yards, not to talk of the physical fatigue it entails. This is no good. I said to Bapu I was down and out. Bapu suggested that I must now spin only one-half of what I spun before. Narandas writes that Keshu spins equally fine yarn at the rate of 350 rounds an hour. How far behind him I am! Yoga means skill in action, says the Gita (II, 50) but I am as far from such skill as ever. I have been carding for a long time but I am unable to produce fine slivers, and if I spin fine yarn, my speed amounts to zero.

June 28, 1932

I spun less today and was able to read for 2 hours longer. The papers carry Hoare's statement: 'Federation will become a settled fact as the provinces and Indian States get ready for it. Meanwhile accept this toy of provincial autonomy.' The Superintendent asked Bapu what he thought of it. He replied, 'Events are shaping themselves as I had expected at the Round Table Conference in London, and not as the moderates had fondly hoped. It is not provincial autonomy; the ministers will have no power, and the departments will be much more expensive. Every so-called step towards responsible government has meant crores of additional expenditure. By provincial autonomy I mean that the Centre should

serve the provinces and not the provinces the Centre. Under the proposed system the Centre will continue to rule the provinces. Where is the autonomy, so long as there is a whole Civil Service fully guaranteed which we cannot remove at will?' The Superintendent then asked: 'So it means that the struggle is prolonged?' Bapu replied, 'Undoubtedly.'

Bapu wrote to Birla asking him to send all important literature on the subject of exchange.

Bapu's spiritual ambition knows no bounds. He is introducing one reform after another at Sabarmati. Log-books have been issued; every worker's hours of work are noted down; all the yarn produced by sacrificial spinning is taken from the spinners; even little children are made to wake up at 3-30 a.m. for prayers which commence at 4. How long will the Ashramites be able to bear all this strain? Every letter from Bapu contains some fresh demand or other. Houses which are closed in the absence of the occupants must be cleaned. Certainly, says Premabehn, but where is the time to do this in? Each house should bear the date when it was last cleaned and a second date when it should be cleaned next. Bapu has great expectations but there is a limit beyond which men cannot work. I drew Bapu's attention to the fact that the Ashram children did not get sufficient sleep. He promised to discuss the point with me.

JUNE 29, 1932

A pathetic letter from X who said he was thinking of committing suicide. To him Bapu wrote at once as follows:

'Why should you wish to lay violent hands on yourself? I understand that you have not stolen anything. And when once you decide to put an end to speculation on the stock exchange, that chapter is closed once for all. Even if theft has been committed, there is no justification for suicide. A man who steals and confesses the theft is any day better than a thief who has not been caught as well as the honest man who has never been tempted to steal. As regards the

debts, as soon as you hand over your all to the creditors, you have discharged your responsibility in full. Let the creditors get you declared an insolvent if they wish. That is not something to be ashamed of. It is manly to take all eventualities in one's stride. As regards the future, I suggest that both of you should go and live at the Ashram without any hesitation. Do not think that you cannot go in a penniless condition to a place which you once visited as rich people. The Ashram is there for all people righteously inclined. Be writing to me. Profit as much as you can by Mirabehn's company. Cling to her for the company of the good is the philosopher's stone in transforming human beings.'

Hoare made a speech and said no peace with Congress was possible so long as it challenged Government. Fighting could not be stopped in the middle of the campaign. The British Government would be disgraced if it could not suppress a movement of this type. In Bapu's letter to Devadas there was a latent reference to this speech: 'We here have boundless patience, and do not mind if a couple of years pass before our effort is crowned with success. We will only claim so much more interest.'

After reading *The Wet Parade* Rajaji wrote to Devadas as follows:

" *The Wet Parade* is a fine novelization of all that has to be said on American prohibition. Chapter after chapter moves up in deliberate order, just clothing up all the prohibition points. Too much of set purpose and 'according to programme'; but a good and exhaustive treatment of the subject, to satisfy those already convinced and make them feel armed and strengthened. You may remember Mathuradas gave me once a book of Zola's to read. It is incomparably superior, but that book deals with alcohol, rather than prohibition. Sinclair's book is a powerful indictment of corruption in American pòlitics, — might frighten one in regard to political prospects in India.

" A real high-class English writer is so superior to mere propaganda writers like Upton Sinclair. Soon after finishing *The Wet Parade* I got a book of short stories of

Hardy's. The contrast was so great. The delicate touch of real art is so different from the propagandist style. Hardy has a short story called 'Son's Veto' that reminded me of the episode in *The Wet Parade*, the incident of Roger Chilcote and Anita — all the difference between raw manure and fruit made out of it. The substance is the same, but the composition and flavour are so different."

Referring to the above Bapu wrote to Devadas:

'Rajaji seems to be rather prejudiced against American writers. I have seen nothing of Hardy as well as Zola. But Upton Sinclair is not a writer to be despised. A propagandist novel cannot be dismissed from an idea that propaganda as such is a fault in it. A propagandist devotes all his powers to the production of his work. He makes no secret of his purpose, and still does not let the interest flag in his story. *Uncle Tom's Cabin* is propaganda pure and simple, but its art is inimitable. Sinclair is a great reformer and writes with a view to promote reforms; yet it is said all his works are interesting. I propose to read them if I have the time.'

JUNE 30, 1932

Read Drummond's *Natural Law in the Spiritual World*. He has an attractive style, but his inferences are rather far-fetched, and Christian fanaticism is evident on every page. Many of his propositions are sound if we replace 'Christian' with 'spiritual' and Christ with God. As mind cannot be produced from matter, our bodies are lifeless until they are touched by consciousness or knowledge. 'To be carnally minded is Death,' 'She that liveth in pleasure is dead while she liveth,' 'To you hath He given life which were dead in trespass and sin,' — all these texts point to the same conclusion. For Drummond 'He that hath not the son hath no life' means that all non-Christians are as good as dead!

Speaking about Buddhism he says: 'There is no true sense in which a man can say, He that hath Buddha hath life. Buddha has nothing to do with life. He may have something to do with morality. He may stimulate, impress,

teach, guide, but there is no distinct new thing added to the souls of those who profess Buddhism. These religions may be developments of the natural, mental or moral man. But Christianity professes to be more. It is the mental or moral *plus* something else or someone else. It is the infusion into the spiritual man of a New Life.'

As against this, hear what Keyserling has to say:

'It is not true that the spirit of Jesus Christ has ever been understood fundamentally by the masses of people who profess his faith. His influence has been everywhere one which has acted from the surface to the centre, and in most cases it has remained to the last an external manifestation. How glaring is the contrast between the profession of the average Christian and the manner of his life! You do not notice this contrast in Buddhist people. Buddha formulated his teaching in so masterly a manner that it has taken real possession of the souls of those who profess it..........Charity in the Christian sense means wishing to be good, in the Buddhist sense it means wanting to let every one come into his own at his own level.... Any one who does this (i.e. proselytizes) is *ipso facto* limited; and any one who does it continuously or even professionally must needs become more and more limited from day to day. For this reason, meanness, aggressiveness, tyranny, lack of tact and lack of understanding are typical traits of the Christian and especially of the Protestant priest. A religion such as Buddhism, which teaches the care for personal salvation as the only motive in existence, is incapable of evoking such traits.'

Drummond has a fine description of the divine and the devilish present in every human breast:

'There is a natural principle in man lowering him, deadening him, pulling him down by inches to the mere animal plane, blinding reason, searing conscience, paralysing will. This is the active destroying principle or Sin. Now to counteract this God has discovered to us another principle which will stop this drifting process in the soul, steer it round, and make it drift the other way. This is the active saving principle or salvation. If a man

finds the first of these powers furiously at work within him, dragging his life downward to destruction, there is only one way to escape his fate, to take resolute hold of the upward power and be borne by it to the opposite goal. And as this second power is the only one in the universe which has the slightest real effect over the first, how shall a man escape if he neglects it?

'The soul, in its highest sense, is a vast capacity for God. There are certain burrowing animals which have taken to spending their lives beneath the surface of the ground. And Nature has taken her revenge upon them in a thoroughly natural way. She has closed up their eyes......There are fishes also which have had to pay the same terrible forfeit for having made their abode in dark caverns where eyes can never be required, and in exactly the same way the spiritual eye must die and lose its power by purely natural law if the soul choose to walk in darkness rather than light. This is the meaning of the famous paradox: "From him that has not shall be taken away even that which he hath:" "Take therefore the talent from him."'

Drummond expounds very well the truth that ignorance of one's real nature, of the fact that God abides within one's heart, is the root of sin:

'The carnal mind, the mind which is turned away from God, which will not correspond with God — this is not moral only but spiritual Death. And sin, that which separates from God, which disobeys God, which cannot in that state correspond with God — this is hell.....To the estrangement of the soul from God the best of theology traces the ultimate cause of sin. Sin is simply apostasy from God, unbelief in God.'

The writer also mentions the means of changing over from the carnal to the spiritual life: Suicide, Mortification, Limitation.

'Suicide: There are many sins which must either be dealt with suddenly or not at all, — all sins of appetite and flesh.......The sudden operation of the knife is the only

successful means of dealing with fleshly sins. The correspondence of the drunkard with his wine is a thing which can be broken off by degrees only in the rarest cases. Total abstinence is the only decisive method of dealing with any sin of the flesh. The very nature of the relations makes it absolutely imperative that every victim of unlawful appetite in whatever direction shall totally abstain. Hence Christ's apparently extreme and peremptory language: "If thy right eye offend thee, pluck it out and cast it from thee" etc. Sudden conversion is the only human and humane way — the decisive stand, the uncompromising rupture with the past, the precipitate flight from sin as of one escaping for his life.

'Mortification, i.e. gradual discipline of the flesh is necessary for another class of sins. "Mortify therefore your members which are upon the earth; fornication, uncleanliness, passion, evil desire, and covetousness, idolatry. Put ye away also all these; anger, wrath, malice, railing, shameful speaking out of your mouth. Lie not one to another; seeing that ye have put off the old man with his doings and have put on the new man, which is being renewed unto knowledge after the image of Him that created him;"......The case here is one of long and humiliating discipline — not at all a surgical but a medical one, and the knife here is of no more use than it is in fever.'

As regards Limitation — a process the performance of which requires a most delicate hand, Drummond refers to love of money which, he says, up to a certain point is a necessity.

Sir Samuel Hoare says that the formation of federation must wait until all the members of the Indian 'league of nations' are ready to join. Chintamani asks if the sanction of the provinces which also are thus members will be a prerequisite, and says this idea did not strike them even in their dreams. Bapu said, 'This is one step forward in the Anglo-Muslim conspiracy. The Muslim majority provinces might insist that they would not join the federation so long as certain conditions were not fulfilled.'

Sapru and others are entering an emphatic protest; what more could they do?

Mrs Lindsay, wife of the Master of Balliol, whose eyes had love written in them and who posed many a problem in *ahimsa* and appealed to Bapu to believe what he chose but not to doubt British *bona fides*, sent a beautiful letter to Bapu who wrote in reply:

"You have beaten me. For the past four weeks or more I have been thinking of writing to you and I could not. And now your most welcome letter giving me a budget of family news has come. Thank you for it. What I wanted to say to you was that in everything I have done, I have asked myself how you would take it. Such was the hold your appealing eyes had on me when you spoke to me at that meeting under Professor Thompson's roof. And then came those never to be forgotten talks under your own roof when you had received me as one of the family. Mahadev is with me. We often talk of all the friends we met in Oxford. Our love to all of you."

The newspapers report that a Brahman *zamindar* was sentenced to 5 years' imprisonment for the murder of a washerwoman. His washerwoman said she would come later and take away his clothes in the evening. This enraged him and he kicked the woman, slapped a second woman who tried to save her from his fury, seized the *lathi* out of the hands of the woman's husband and beat him, and at last killed a third woman 50 years old who was injured in the spleen and died on the spot. Criminals are released nowadays and Congressmen are awarded long terms of imprisonment. With these facts in view Bapu said, 'He will not remain in prison even for 5 months, not to talk of 5 years. He will promise to start a loyalist association, ask the tenants to pay their dues and help Government in suppressing the Civil Disobedience movement, and he will secure his release at once.' The Sardar wondered why he did not offer the defence that the woman was a fighter for Swaraj, refused to wash any other clothes except Khadi and had trumped up a false charge against him.

JULY 1, 1932

The Round Table Conference is over, and Sir Samuel Hoare has announced that some of its members will be invited to appear before a Parliamentary Committee. This is a breach of ministerial promise and a slap on the face of Indian Liberals. Shastri's comment was: 'It humiliates all non-Congress nationalists,' and yet Jayakar and Sapru betray no indignation in their statement. They still hope that a somewhat more satisfactory statement would be made. During the evening walk Bapu asked me to read to him Horniman's article with the caption: 'Humiliating, but we shall still watch and wait.' After hearing it through he said it was a fine article; not mere criticism but a picture of the anguish in his soul. I said, 'He calls the Jayakar Sapru statement futile, but he means to say it is imbecile.' Bapu agreed and wondered how the Liberals had shown such high spirits in boycotting the Simon Commission. The Sardar said they perhaps expected that some of them would be co-opted to sit on it.

A letter from Swami Anand in which he said that he would not commit the crime of taking up Bapu's time when he was free and when he was in jail Swami was not lucky enough to be in his company. Therefore he was afraid he would never be able to live with Bapu and discuss things with him. To him Bapu replied: 'Many of my co-workers have had the same experience of being near me and yet far, far away. You have to extract from such a position what satisfaction you can. Kallenbach used to say that when he first came in contact with me, he could see me every day and take as much of my time as he wished whenever he felt like seeing me. When however we drew very much nearer and lived in the same place, we slept and had our meals together but had hardly any time to talk with each other. Even while I was going home from office, there would be some one else wanting to have a talk with me. This became a matter of daily complaint with Kallenbach who deduced the proposition that as people drew nearer to me, they lived farther apart. I said the proposition was correct and added that he had understood

me and hence drawn so near to me. He had therefore no more right to take my time, and I had no right to give him time at the cost of those who were still to get acquainted with me. Workers who have become members one of another cannot have anything to ask each other, and if they do ask like that, they will have thus far failed to discharge their ordinary duties. If this is the correct view, co-workers like you who are near me and yet far from me have no legitimate ground for complaint.'

Swami had asked Bapu what he thought about Ramakrishna and Vivekanand. On this point Bapu wrote: 'I read Rolland's books about them with interest. I have always entertained a feeling of reverence for Ramakrishna. I had not read much about him but the reverence was due to what I had heard from his admirers. I cannot say that reading Rolland has deepened my feeling for him. His books are as a matter of fact addressed to the West. I will not go so far as to say that we cannot derive benefit from them, but they had nothing to give me at any rate. The things which had excited my admiration are also there in Rolland; other details given by him did nothing to increase it. Vivekanand was not to my mind a devotee (*bhakta*) to the same extent as the master was. He had great love for mankind, was full of emotion and was often led by it. This emotion was a limiting factor as regards his understanding. The distinction drawn by him between religion and politics does not hold good, but what is th use of criticizing such a great man as he was? Whenever we assume the role of critics, we will find something to criticize in every man. It is however our duty only to take what lessons we can from the lives of such great men. I have taken this couplet * of Tulsidas' to heart:

जड़चेतन गुणदोषमय विश्व किन्ह करतार ।
संत–हंस गुण-पय गहहिं, परिहरि वारिविकार ॥

* 'God made this world compact of matter as well as life, defects as well as qualities. The wise, like swans, drink milk, and reject the water added to it.' *Ed.*

I therefore do not like to criticize. But I have written this as I feel that you would like to know even the critical part of my mind. I have not the shadow of a doubt that Vivekanand was a great servant of the nation. We have been privileged to see how he spent himself in the service of truth as he saw it. When I went to Belur in 1901, I was very eager to have his *darshan* (view) but the Swami (monk) in charge informed me that he was ill in Calcutta, and no one was permitted to see him. This was a great disappointment for me. My feeling of reverence for the great has saved me from many a calamity. There was not a single well-known worker then in Calcutta whom I did not see. And in most cases I went to him on foot not in order to save money as usual but in the spirit of a pilgrim.'

Kishorlal asked Bapu to suggest what he should read in addition to what he had read already. To him Bapu replied as follows :

'I do not feel like rcommending anything in particular. Indeed I do not think that your reading is insufficient. My own reading is quite odd. I am doing some Urdu at present. I am also trying to get some idea of currency and exchange, as ignorance of it would be inexcusable. There is the desire to render service at the back of these studies. The same desire impels me to deepen my knowledge of Tamil as well as Bengali and Marathi. If we have to stay in jail for a pretty long time, I may recommence the study of all these languages. If your mind is working in the same direction, you may certainly try to acquire the knowledge of some new Indian language. When the Satyagraha Ashram was founded in 1915, the study of regional languages was part of its programme. My predilection for this study is as strong as ever, but I would not like to subject you to that temptation. To my mind there is one thing needful for every one of us, viz. that we should think over what we have read, digest it and make it an integral part of our daily life. I have advised X to give up even the Gita and Raichandbhai's books, to be absorbed in his own work and to think about it alone as I found that he had learnt many

things in these books by rote, but was unable to make good use of this learning. His heart is pure, but his intellect lets him down. He gives way to all manner of imaginings, ending in smoke. My advice has appealed to him, and his mind is free from a heavy burden. Be the result of this advice what it may, experience has made it clear to me that the train of thought behind it is quite sound. Therefore to a man of your type I would not care to suggest the reading of books on religion.'

On the study of the heavens: 'It has become for me one more method of seeing God. This time I had a sudden realization here that it is holy companionship. Even the stars address silent discourses to us.'

JULY 2, 1932

It is reported that all the dealers in foreign cloth at Mulji Jetha market in Bombay removed their stock elsewhere of their own accord and thus reduced to a nullity the Commissioner's order to demolish the wall between the Swadeshi and the foreign cloth shops. But Bapu said, 'It may be true, but is almost too good to be true. Did the Swadeshi and the foreign cloth dealers put their heads together, or did the dealers in foreign cloth realize the difficulty of the Swadeshi shops and take this step of their own accord?'

Many members of the Round Table Conference have expressed their views about the statement of Sir Samuel Hoare; Tambe's opinion is the most direct and correct of them all. None of them has had a word to say about the ordinances. Only Phiroze Sethna said it was a terrible thing that the national struggle should be prolonged. Why are the Indian liberals unaware of their duty? Where is the sense in their co-operating with the British Government even now? They can, if they wish, have the ordinances withdrawn, but they do not seem to wish it. This is a riddle indeed. It is easy to attribute motives, but that is not something for a follower of Bapu to do.

JULY 3, 1932

This week also Bapu disposed of the Ashram post on Sunday night. To S. who wrote a long letter as usual Bapu replied as follows:

'Your reasoning as regards rape is sound. If a woman who is in danger of being molested has the right to commit suicide, so has a trustee who is being robbed of the property in his charge. But he himself should have thought out what is the right thing for him to do. If a woman prefers not to kill herself in order to save herself from rape, we have no right to say that she has done something wrong. On the other hand if a trustee gives up his life in the defence of trust property, we cannot assume that he did the right thing. It all depends upon the individual's state of mind at the time. Still I believe that a woman, if she has the requisite courage, will be ready to give up her life rather than her virtue. I therefore would certainly encourage such an attitude in my talks with women, and make it clear that it is an easy thing to give up life if we will. For many women are under the wrong impression that they can do nothing but yield to the wrongdoer if there is no man to depend upon or if they do not learn to use a dagger or a revolver. I would certainly tell them that they need not depend upon the weapon in the defender's hand. Their virtue will be its own defence. But if such is not the case, they can resort to suicide instead of using a dagger and the like. There is no need for them to look upon themselves as weak (*abala*).

'Imaginary questions may sometimes be put, but it is best to avoid them. One who is in the habit of posing them is in the same case as a student of geometry who obtains solutions of problems from his teacher, and who thus fails to acquire a mastery over the subject. Then again as regards problems in ethics, there is the further objection that no situation of our imagination can be on all fours with a situation in real life. Even the slightest difference between the two will suffice to suggest different lines of conduct. I therefore warned you against obtaining solutions of imaginary problems in order to be ready to face

imaginary situations, for such solutions will not be a help but a hindrance pure and simple when we are face to face with reality. The seeker of such solutions will become incapable of independent thought. It is therefore best fully to understand the fundamental principle, to digest it and to commit the mistakes which we are likely to make in applying the principle in actual life. That is the right way to learn. On the other hand one who obtains ready-made solutions of imaginary problems loses all confidence in himself. Some such experience perhaps led the author of the Gita to write the tenth verse * of Chapter ten. The Lord there assures us that if an aspirant worships Him with affectionate and constant devotion, He will suggest to him the proper course of conduct when the emergency arises. The meaning of the verse will be clearer still if you replace the word "the Lord" with "Truth." I cannot encourage you to pose imaginary problems, as it may do you harm.'

Mangala asked an excellent question: 'What is the meaning of reducing ourselves to zero?' Bapu answered: 'It means to be the last in receiving good things, to serve every one, not to expect gratitude and to be the first in suffering. One who thus reduces himself to zero will always be absorbed in his work.'

Sharada asked if the saint Muldas had done well to shield a widow who had misbehaved herself by declaring that he was her partner in guilt, though as a matter of fact he was not. Bapu replied: 'He did wrong if he really did any such thing. It was bad also for the widow. One may not tell a lie even to relieve some one else's distress. It can never be relieved in such a manner.'

To Dudhi Desai: 'You must do only what you can. Do nothing out of bashfulness or out of a feeling that you must obey me. I only pointed out what your duty was. You can discharge it only according to your capacity. Again you must not be unhappy if you cannot act as I suggest.

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* तेषां सततयुक्तानां भजतां प्रीतिपूर्वकम् ।
ददामि बुद्धियोगं तं येन मामुपयान्ति ते ॥

If you are thus unhappy about it, you make it difficult for me to suggest what your duty is in any particular situation.'

K is ready with his questions every week :

Q. Who is bound ?

A. He who believes in his own ego.

Q. What is salvation (*mukti*) ?

A. Freedom from likes and dislikes (*raga-dvesha*).

Q. What is hell ? Ans. Untruth.

Q. What is the means of salvation ?

A. *Ahimsa* (non-violence).

In a letter to Premabehn Bapu said that if the individuals or associations with which we come in contact are imperfect it is our duty to help them to become perfect. But if their defects outweigh their qualities, we should leave and non-co-operate with them.

JULY 4, 1932

Bapu says that Truth is God. I found something similar in the *Imitation of Christ* :

" O Truth ! My God ! Make me one with Thee in everlasting charity. I am oftentimes wearied with reading and hearing many things. In Thee is all I wish or long for. Let all teachers hold their peace, and all created things keep silence in Thy presence. Do Thou alone speak to me."

" Thou, O Lord, my God, the eternal Truth, speak to me."

One sometimes feels as if some of Thomas à Kempis' observations were derived from the Gita. For instance compare the series in Chapter II, 62 ff (ध्यायतो विषयान् etc.) with the following from the *Imitation of Christ* :

" Whenever a man desireth anything inordinately, straightway he is disquieted within himself........He is easily moved to anger if any one thwarts him. And if he have pursued his inclination, forthwith he is burdened with remorse of conscience for having gone after his passion which helpeth him not at all to the peace he looked for. It is resisting the passions, and not by serving them, that true peace of heart is to be found. Peace therefore is not in the heart of carnal man, nor in the man who is devoted to outward things but in the fervent and spiritual man."

Raihana sent Bapu some lines from Zafar the Urdu poet which may be translated as follows:

'He is not a human being who forgets God in his day of joy and who is not afraid of God in his anger.'

I said I had often heard Shaukat Ali quote these lines. 'Yes,' said Bapu. 'He was honest in the days when he quoted such poetry, and he is honest now. He has now come to believe that Hindus cannot be trusted and it is in the Muslims' interest to fight it out with them. This is a regrettable attitude. But the service of his community is his only motive. He is not selfish. There are many such honest men, as for instance Samuel Hoare who told us to our face that he had no faith in our ability to look after ourselves. The most outspoken of them all was Baldwin. I said to him my contention was that British rule had not done us any good. He then replied: "I must tell you that I am proud of my people's record in India." And no wonder, for Ramakrishna Bhandarkar actually believed that an ordinary Tommy was superior to us.

JULY 5, 1932

Bapu sent two letters and two wires of condolence today. There is hardly an instant when men do not die. 'In the midst of life we are in death.' But we are conscious of the presence of the Angel of death only when he strikes down a friend or a relative. The Vedas describe the soul as both death and immortality. The letters were sent to Bhai Parmanand who lost his wife and to Saraladevi Chaudharani who lost her mother, and the wires to Rajagopalachariar and his daughter who lost her husband.

Writing to Devadas Bapu said, 'It is a great shock for Rajaji, but I am not anxious about him as he is a man of patience. Death as such leaves little impression on me; I only feel for the bereaved relatives. There can be no greater ignorance than to mourn over death.'

To a mill-owner who said he felt like writing on Khadi and *gud* (molasses) but was naturally hesitant, he wrote: 'Textile mills are there and will be there for some time side by side with Khadi. But they are incompatibles in

the last analysis. For the ideal is that each village should produce its own cloth. And when it is realized, India will not need mills any longer. But today at any rate you can certainly support both. Only, the ideal should be presented to the people in the interest of truth. Critics will criticize at all times and there is no help for it. I am not an expert but I have an idea that mills will always be needed for the production of white sugar, which cannot be manufactured with ease in villages. Nor can sugarcane be grown in each village. Therefore the manufacture of *gud* cannot become a universal village industry. Perhaps I am wrong in thinking so. However if a person can support both mills and Khadi, he can by a parity of reasoning support *gud* as well as mill-made sugar. My study of books on economics has strengthened my belief that the remedies they propound in order to eradicate poverty in India are fruitless. The right remedy lies in so organizing production and consumption that they go on simultaneously of their own accord, that is to say in the revival of village industries.'

I read to Bapu Keyserling's views on Islam, upon which he said, 'The strength of Islam lies not in its monotheism or its so-called democracy but in the Muslims' unflinching faith in their own religion.'

JULY 6, 1932

Chintamani seems to have properly organized opposition to Hoare's statement. The statement of Muhammad Zahir Ali of Lucknow is especially remarkable. He quotes from the *Sunday Express* to show MacDonald's 'abject surrender' to the Tories:

'In the meantime Mr MacDonald has taken at one gulp the whole of the Tory Indian policy. It is not even Mr Baldwin's Tory policy in India which MacDonald has taken. Not at all, it is the Indian policy of the very heart of the Conservative party.'

He then says if he was asked what they had done after non-co-operating with the British Government, he would answer: 'Let the heavens fall, but let not the honour of India trail in the dust.'

The *Hindu* publishes a statement from Rangachari in which he is bitter against the liberals: 'It is a matter of disappointment that neither in the joint statement of Sapru and Jayakar nor in Shastri's statement there is a reference to this ordinance rule. . . . This is not the time for weighing words and playing the role of statesman.'

Patro too observes that no new constitution can possibly be worked without co-operating with Gandhi.

I asked Bapu how it was that Rangachari and others had suddenly waked up now.

Bapu: 'He is a man of that type. He is certainly brave. For the rest both he and Patro appear to have suffered some disappointment and therefore spoken out.'

The Sardar: 'MacDonald will swallow all these protests and his award is sure to go against us.'

Bapu: 'I still have hope that MacDonald will stand up against the Tories.'

The Sardar: 'You are wrong. They are all birds of the same feather.'

Bapu: 'Still I think he has his own convictions.'

The Sardar: 'If he really had them, would he have sold himself to the Tories? He too does not wish to get off our backs.'

Bapu: 'You are right, but that is not because he is selfish. No Englishman would like to give up control over India with a few exceptions like Laski, Horrabin and Brockway. Benn, Lees Smith and others are like MacDonald. I only say that he has entered into coalition with the Tories in the interest of his country. He is now trying to avoid giving the "award." He cannot give the go-by to lifelong convictions.'

I: 'Is he going to oppose separate electorates for Muslims?'

Bapu: 'No, but he cannot gulp down such electorates for the "untouchables."'

I: 'Do you think he has so much understanding?'

Bapu: 'Certainly. Would he not understand something that was grasped even by the Simon Commission? He may say that he agreed to the issue of

ordinances and of the statement but he could not go along with the Tories any farther. That is why his award is still being delayed. I would not wonder if Hoare does anything and everything, for he wishes to crush India by hook or by crook. For this he will always be ready to pay the Muslim his own price.'

Doyle visited us today to discuss the question of Bapu's correspondence with Mirabehn and talk about the denture. He said Major Bhandari stopped Bapu's letter because he had written that he was suffering from dysentery. If this news spread in the outside world, it would cause the public anxiety. Otherwise there was nothing objectionable in the letter, and as Bapu had agreed to non-publication of his letters, he had every right to write what he chose.

JULY 7, 1932

The *Leader* is taking a strong line nowadays. The 'dual' policy comes in for severe criticism, and the British Government is advised to arrange a compromise with Congress. The article ends with the following sentence:

'The longer a compromise is delayed with what *Time and Tide* has described as "the strongest, best organized and most ubiquitous party in India," the more complicated will become the Indian problem.'

The Sardar began his study of Sanskrit today, as he received Satavlekar's series of text-books.

The *Imitation of Christ* is a great help in attaining peace of mind. On every page there are passages reminiscent of the sayings of Indian saints:

'He who only shunneth temptation outwardly and doth not pluck out their root, will profit little; nay temptations will soon return, and he will find himself in a worse condition.'

Cf. कामक्रोधलोभमोहनुं ज्यां लगी मूळ न जाय जी, संगप्रसंगे पांगरे etc.

"For as a ship without a helm is driven to and fro by the waves; so the man who is negligent and giveth up his resolution is tempted in many ways."

This contains the same idea as Gita II, 67 :

अिंद्रियाणां हि चरतां यन्मनोनुविधीयते ।
तदस्य हरति प्रज्ञां वायुर्नावमिवांभसि ॥

JULY 8, 1932

The Major informed us that he had received orders to forward the whole of Bapu's incoming and outgoing post to Government. These orders have apparently been issued because a letter in which Bapu said that his views on the question of Indian public men going to England were well known passed through their hands. Government orders were that Bapu's outgoing letters should all be sent to them. The Major thought this betrayed Government's lack of confidence in him. He therefore suggested that Government might examine the whole of the incoming post as well. We have thus received no letters at all this week. Bapu has already stopped seeing interviewers, and perhaps the correspondence also will now cease. 'This will save us much trouble and we will have more time to devote to worship,' as Narsinh Mehta said when his wife died ! Bapu wrote to Doyle, asking him to let him know what Government thought of this matter, and what was his own position. This step is said to have been taken at the instance of the Government of India. Bapu remarked they wanted to prove on the strength of his letters that he was a scoundrel, a hypocrite and a devil !

JULY 9, 1932

While we were taking the evening walk, I read to Bapu Rameshchandra Banerji's article in the *Modern Review* on Castes in Educational Reports. He said, 'It is a very valuable article, and the result of laborious research. It traces the development of the British policy of "divide and rule" in a most convincing manner.'

The Sardar said, 'There never was such unanimity in England on the Indian question as there is now.' Bapu replied, 'It has always been there, for to relax their hold on India spells poverty for them, and to retain it is in their

interest.' He then said, 'I think India never had so many friends in England as there are now, and people in England know much more about us. I would not be surprised if people there volunteered for service in a Peace Army to be sent to India as they did in the case of China. They may declare one day that they could not put up with so much falsehood and injustice, and if things were not set right, they would give up their lives. This is what I suggested in my Switzerland speech. Many would join the Peace Army, as for instance Muriel, Alexander, Hoyland, Esther and Maud Royden.'

Matthew asked Bapu if 'God is Truth' and 'God is Love' meant anything more than that 'God is truthful' and 'God is loving.' To him Bapu replied as follows:

'In "God is Truth", *is* certainly does not mean *is equal to* nor does the proposition merely mean, "God is truthful." Truth is not a mere attribute of God, but He is That. He is nothing if He is not That. Truth in Sanskrit means *Sat*. *Sat* means Is. Therefore, Truth is implied in *Is*. God is, nothing else is. Therefore the more truthful we are, the nearer we are to God. We *are* only to the extent that we are truthful.

'The illustration of the hen and her chickens is good. But better still is that of the Lord and his serf. The latter is far from the former because both are mentally so far apart though physically so near. Hence Milton's "Mind is its own place," and the Gita's "Man is the author of his own freedom or bondage." It is to realize this freedom that I would have us labour as pariahs and labourers.'

JULY 10, 1932

Jayakar and Sapru have resigned their membership of the Consultative Committee. The Sardar's comment was: 'The Dasera *tattus* (horses without spirit) too ran after all.'

Last evening we received our post as censored by Government. Krishnadas writes to say that Satishbabu has organized spinning classes and the 85-year-old Har Dayal Nag is in fine fettle. I salute that old man and I am

sure he will die in harness. He does not know what rest is. There are few such truthful workers among Congressmen. Bapu said, 'He has cultivated the *yoga* of selfless action.' Motilal Roy mentions a violent revolutionary who was converted to non-violence and joined their group but was arrested and detained without trial.

Many letters were written today, some of them being pretty long. The Sardar said, 'The more the merrier. The translators will soon feel fatigue and pass them on, saying there was nothing objectionable in them.'

As regards the time taken up by prayers, Bapu wrote to Pandit Khare :

'We must not grudge it. Islam enjoins 5 prayers a day each of which would take at least 15 minutes, and at which the same verses have to be repeated. Christian prayers contain one permanent item which also takes 15 minutes each time. In churches belonging to the Catholics and to the Established Church in England devotions take at least half an hour in the morning, at noon and again in the evening. This is not too much for the devotee. Finally, none of us has now the right to modify the order of the various items in our prayers. The subject has been thoroughly discussed already, and the discussion closed. We have to learn to appreciate our prayers and make them an instrument of the beatific vision. We must derive our daily spiritual nutrition from them. Let us not think of changes but pour our whole soul into them, such as they are.'

In his letter to Mathuradas Bapu referred to the woolen blanket he carried with him when he went to see the King in England and said, 'Love of Khadi has not made much headway in India. In other words devotion for God incarnated as the poor is not much in evidence. Even where this devotion is present, ignorant devotees have not realized that Khadi is the simplest symbol of this devotion. You may, if you please, write a book about improving the quality of yarn but you must not write a single sentence which is not based on personal experience, nor generalize on the strength of it. Your experience

should be capable of becoming universal. If such is not the case, drop the idea of writing. Writings not based on experience are almost useless, as for instance a modern translation of Charaka. For we are unable to identify many herbs which he describes, and to offer convincing proof of the value of such drugs as are identifiable. Therefore the essential thing is that you must yourself produce fine yarn of various counts, and analyse the contribution of the spindle, the wheel, the cotton, the carding and your own spinning in such production. Compare notes with other spinners. If you write after such preparation, your book will be of sterling worth.

'I once used to think that to spin 20s on the wheel was enough. I then raised it to 40s and now I place no upper limit at all. If we can grow such fine cotton, card it with meticulous care, spin such a fine thread and get it woven by a competent weaver, I would say that we must spin 400s. We must make all the progress made possible by our experience of and love for spinning, for it is very likely that in that case the art of hand-spinning will at once become remunerative.'

We fix coloured slips on our indifferent envelopes to cover blots. Premabehn imitated us and pasted slips with a zigzag border on a good envelope. To her Bapu wrote: 'You tried to adorn the envelope but have succeeded only in spoiling it. That is always the case as regards decoration which takes no account of utility. Your slips were not firmly fixed and thus appeared ugly, while they had no utility whatsoever. They only meant labour and time lost. So much more paper belonging to the nation was wasted. The moral is: (1) Do not imitate anything without understanding it; and (2) Ornament for its own sake is no ornament at all. They say that every bit of carving in the famous churches of Europe has some use or other. This may or may not be the case. But there is no doubt that the principle I have laid down is correct.

'There is a general impression that I am able to make men work as hard as they can. If this is a fact, the reason is that I never suspect any one of theft, and I am satisfied

with what effort each of them puts forth. Some even say that people are able to deceive me as they can deceive no one else. If they are right, I am not sorry for it. It is enough if I get a testimonial that I deceive none. If others are not prepared to issue such a certificate to me, I will issue it myself. Untruth hurts me as nothing else does.

'I do not believe in the "greatest good of the greatest number", nor can I agree that might is right. For human beings the object in view should be the good of all, with the weak being served first. We are two-legged men, but have still to cast away the nature of four-footed beasts.'

From a letter to Narandas Gandhi: 'This is enough for the man who is true to himself: "Do not undertake anything beyond your capacity, and at the same time do not harbour the wish to do less than you can." One who takes up tasks beyond his powers is proud and attached; on the other hand one who does less than he can is a thief. If we keep a time-table, we can save ourselves from this last-mentioned sin indulged in even unconsciously. I do not say "save" but only "can save", for if the time-table is not cheerfully and intelligently adhered to, it does not yield the maximum results.'

Bapu's weekly letter to the Ashram this time dealt with studies. He distinguished between literary studies and studies intended to promote the quest of Truth. Only the latter should be prosecuted in the Ashram. Bapu assigned still more work to Narandas. He is always asking good workers for more. 'The Ashram is a great school where education is imparted not for a fixed number of hours but all the twenty-four hours. Every one who lives in the Ashram as a seeker after Truth is teacher as well as student, teacher as regards the subjects in which he is well-versed and student of things which he has still to learn. The best part of education is character-building. The farther we advance in keeping the Ashram observances, the greater will be our spiritual learning and the power of realizing Truth.'

Bhau asked if it was not hypocritical on our part to recite at the morning prayer the verse * in which the worshipper says, 'I am God' when as a matter of fact we conduct ourselves all day long as if we were only our physical bodies and nothing more. To him Bapu replied: 'Yes, that verse seemed inappropriate even to me for a time. But on thinking more deeply about it, it seemed to me that there was nothing wrong in repeating the verse intelligently. Our intellect certainly says that man is not mere dust, but the seer residing in the midst of it. This seer is described in the verse in question, and then the worshipper makes the affirmation: "I am that seer, *Brahma*." This declaration can only be made by people who are striving to reach that state from day to day and to loosen their connection with the physical body. Whenever they are beset by fear, likes and dislikes, they remember the attributes of *Brahma* (God) and try not to be swayed by those unworthy emotions. Progressing in this way, they at last become one with the object of their meditation. Therefore let us remember that verse every day humbly but with determination, and act every moment in the light of it.'

From other letters: 'There is a class of people to which many of us belong. They read and read and read until they almost lose their power of thinking. To such people I suggest that they should stop reading and think over what they have previously read.'

'If God is equated with Truth, we can see Him face to face. It is not fair to understand literally the poet's description about Dhruva and others who are said to have "seen" God; that is only a metaphor........To think, speak and act truly is the best and constant sacrifice

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* प्रातः स्मरामि हृदि संस्फुरदात्मतत्त्वम्
सच्चित्सुखं परमहंसगतिं तुरीयम् ।
यत्स्वप्नजागरसुषुप्तमवैति नित्यम्
तद् ब्रह्म निष्कलमहं न च भूतसङ्घः ।।

(*yajna*) ; its present-day symbol is to spin with the desire to help others.........Religion consists in keeping the observances.† '

From a letter to Gangabehn : ' The disturbance of my correspondence continues and letters are delayed. Thus we are made to feel now and then that we are prisoners, and given the opportunity to practise the Gita doctrine. When we cannot get what we want, we find out if the deprivation disturbs our peace of mind. If it does, it shows that we have much headway to make up. I therefore try to preserve my equanimity. We may ask only for what we are entitled to. If we get it, it is all right. If we do not get it, then also it is all right. Congratulate Sarojini on her assuming the role of a physician. Tell her also that her sweets were appreciated by many of us. But this should not be construed as a request for further favours of the same kind. Real enjoyment is derived from drops, not from mouthfuls. Sweets are not the thing for us as they are for her, whom we dare not imitate. Here we are a servant, a farmer and a porter. If the like of us put on royal robes, the village urchins would pelt stones at us and we should have deserved such treatment. Tell all this to Sarojini Devi if you can tell her without putting her out. Otherwise this lesson may be learnt by your other fellow-prisoners. You see how I have mixed instruction with amusement.'

Some beautiful things from Thomas à Kempis :

' No man can safely appear in public, but he who loves seclusion.

' No man can safely be a superior but he who loves to live in subjection.

' No man can safely command but he who hath learned how to obey well.

' No man can rejoice securely but he who hath the testimony of a good conscience within.'

† See *From Yeravda Mandir* by Gandhiji. *Ed.*

Cf. the following with Gita II-37 (तस्मादुत्तिष्ठ कौन्तेय युद्धाय कृतनिश्चयः।).

'Arise, and begin this very instant, and say, now is the time to do, now is the time to fight, now is the proper time to amend my life.

'Except thou do violence to thyself, thou wilt not overcome vice.'

The following is a parallel to Bapu's opinion that salvation is impossible for a man so long as he is still living :

'As long as we carry about this frail body we cannot be free from sin, nor live without weariness and sorrow......We must wait God's mercy till iniquity pass away and this mortality be swallowed up in life.'

JULY 11, 1932

In connection with Bapu's advice to Premabehn to avoid useless decoration and to Mathuradas to spin 400s, I had a discussion with Bapu about his views on art. His conclusions may be summarized as follows :

'Beauty divorced from utility is inconceivable, utility here being taken in the widest sense of the word. Cloth woven from 400s may or may not be good for wearing, but the laborious effort which one has to put forth in spinning such superfine yarn, the mysteries of the art of spinning which are unfolded to him and the solutions of problems which suggest themselves to him in the process are all beneficial for Daridranarayan (God as the poor). When 20s was in view, we spun only 10s. With 400s in view we are sure to spin 50s or 60s. Therefore even from the standpoint of developing the art of spinning, it is very useful to aim at 400s. We ourselves will certainly not wear cloth woven from 50s or 100s, preferring to protect the body with only 6s. But we shall have served Daridranarayan only if we prove that we can cater for the needs of the most delicately nurtured person. There must be the background of the service of Daridranarayan behind the fine yarn we spin. And one devoted to such service will not despise but provide for the man who uses cloth made from

400s. What do the pictures and sculptures which held me spell-bound at the Vatican show ? There are not many who have the capacity of appreciating their beauty. But the painters and the sculptors in question certainly worked with a view to serve humanity. If a picture inspires evil thoughts in the minds of the spectator, it does not deserve to be called artistic. For art is that which leads a man one step forward on the path of morality and gives him elevated views. If it degrades him ethically, it is not art, but only obscenity. I am now reading books on astronomy, in which it has been shown that the heat of one single square yard on the sun's surface is sufficient to support life on earth. This is a most useful fact. The sun is in its place millions of miles from the earth while we are in our place. Similarly drawing a thread several miles long from a single sliver is a service to the art of spinning.

'The guiding principle of Ashram education is in my opinion the liberty of the child. The youngest child should feel that it is something. We should discover its special capacities, and having discovered them, provide it with the means for their full development on condition that it will use all its knowledge for the benefit of society. We will not paralyse its intellect by loading it with books. Parents in the Ashram will live for their children, and learn from them as well as teach them. The whole of their life will be a liberal education.

'We have not still much achievement to our credit, for the very simple reason that we are still only 16 years old. Then again the last 12 years have been years of continual struggle. The struggle too has been a great educator for us. We commenced the 1930 campaign by sacrificing the Ashram, which was a stage in our development.'

JULY 12, 1932

The *ghi* (clarified butter) which we received last time was not purchased from the market but sent by the Superintendent from his own house. He said the letters written by Bapu to fellow-prisoners at Yeravda would have to be sent to Government for approval. But Bapu said he

could not submit to such cumbrous procedure and would fight it out with Government. Questioned about the political situation he said, 'The liberals have no sense of self-respect, as Sir Samuel Hoare thinks; otherwise he would never have made such proposals. In fact there was nothing like consultation at the Round Table Conference. I could see that the officials had everything their own way. Even so there were elements in the scheme which might have satisfied the liberals. But the modified scheme leaves no room for self-deception, and therefore the liberals can do nothing but reject it out of hand.'

'What will they do now?' asked the Sardar.

'They are in real difficulty,' replied Bapu. 'They cannot join hands with Congress. How long will they be able to maintain this aloofness?'

Read Ramanand Chatterji's fine reply to the *Musalman's* criticism of the Manifesto of Bengal Hindus published in the June issue of the *Modern Review*.

JULY 13, 1932

Only two or three letters were received today through Government. One of them contained a Musalman's tirade. In the second a man says, 'God cannot do anything beyond giving us the fruit of our own actions. Why then should we worship Him? Must we not rather pity Him?' The Superintendent withheld such useless letters and gave us only useful ones. Now Government detains the useful letters and sends on trash here. I wondered if this was done in order to vex us. Bapu said the Sardar's conjecture was more acceptable; he thought the task of reading the letters was assigned to some clerk who would at once send quite innocent letters while retaining others for being shown to his superior officer. I said the Sardar hardly ever put a liberal interpretation on the acts of Government. 'That is right,' said Bapu. 'But remember that he is now studying Sanskrit.'

A gem from Thomas à Kempis:

"There is nothing that so defileth and entangleth the heart of man as an * *impure attachment to created things.*

If thou wilt refuse § *exterior consolations*, then shalt thou be able to apply thy mind to heavenly things and experience frequent interior joy."

JULY 14, 1932

To the Muslim who advised Bapu to leave politics of which he was ignorant to men like the Aga Khan and Shastri, to retire to the Himalayas and confess his error Bapu wrote a letter with his own hand :

" Dear friend,

" I thank you for your admonition. You do not expect me to argue with you. I fear that as a prisoner, I would not be permitted to enter into argument over political affairs. But I may tell you that deep thinking in the solitude of a jail has not induced a change in my outlook."

The Sardar : 'Why did you write a reply to this abusive letter with your own hand ?'

Bapu : 'Because I must.'

The Sardar : 'Is that a reward for abuse ? It will make him think too highly of himself.'

Bapu : 'I do not think it does us any harm.'

Remarking that such people, if they are honest, may be deeply influenced by a single letter, Bapu wrote as follows to the atheist with his own hand :

" There can be no manner of doubt that this universe of sentient beings is governed by a Law. If you can think of Law without its Giver, I would say that the Law is the Law-giver, that is God. When we pray to the Law we simply yearn after knowing the Law and obeying it. We become what we yearn after. Hence the necessity for prayer. Though our present life is governed by our past, our future must by that very law of cause and effect be affected by what we do now. To the extent therefore that we feel the choice between two or more courses we must make that choice.

" Why evil exists and what it is, — are questions which appear to be beyond our limited reason. It should

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* ये हि संस्पर्शजा भोगा दुःखयोनय एव ते। गीता ५:२२।

§ यस्त्वात्मरतिरेव स्यादात्मतृप्तश्च मानवः। गीता ३:१७।

be enough to know that both good and evil exist. And as often as we can distinguish between good and evil, we must choose the one and shun the other."

To a Bengali child who asked if he could take some vegetable product in place of milk Bapu replied :

"I took goat's milk because I had vowed not to take buffalo's or cow's milk. Physiologically there is little difference between the three. It would have been better from the ethical standpoint if I could have resisted the temptation to take goat's milk. But the will to live was greater than the will to obey the ethical code. My views on the ethics of milk food remain unchanged. But I see that there is no effective vegetable substitute for milk. You should not give it up."

One more gem from Thomas à Kempis :

"This is the highest and most profitable lesson: truly to know and despise ourselves.

"To think nothing of ourselves, and always to judge well and highly of others, is great wisdom and perfection.

"We are all frail ; but none is more frail than thyself."

"Never think that thou hast made any progress until thou feel that thou art inferior to all."

This is not only sound morality but also good psychology. A man can never know any others as well as he knows himself. Therefore as he discovers more and more faults in himself, he feels that others may be free from them and thus considers them to be superior to himself.

Another gem :

"If only thy heart were right, then every created thing would be to thee a mirror of life and a book of holy teaching. There is no creature so little and so vile as not to manifest the goodness of God. A pure heart penetrates heaven and hell."

JULY 15, 1932

Today's papers contain Hoare's second speech which supplements his first and answers the objections of the liberals. The Sardar asked Bapu what he thought of this 'rallying the moderates.' Bapu replied it was full only of

cunning and very disappointing. He had thought that Hoare was an honest man but now perhaps he might have to revise his opinion. The Sardar suggested that Bapu should write him a letter. Bapu replied he had often thought of writing to him.

Bapu liked Horniman's comment on Hoare's speech:

"He does not know when he is politically dishonest. He is not only unable to appreciate political values, he is quite innocent of any ethics in political conduct......His speech is a shameless admission that the reservations in the Prime Minister's speech were deliberately intended to leave the way open for the scrapping of the Round Table Conference."

He read the whole of his article and remarked that Horniman was nowadays writing very well indeed.

Bapu said, 'I asked Hoare if he believed that we were not fit to manage our own affairs. He replied he would say yes if I wanted him to be frank. He said this with superb self-confidence and without the least sense of shame.'

The Sardar asked who could the Indian merchants be to whom Hoare seemed to look for support. Bapu replied these might be H and K, but certainly not Purushottamdas and Birla.

Every word of what Bapu said in England is being justified by the events from time to time. He proclaimed from the housetops that the Round Table Conference was not representative of India.

Hoare now asks the Liberals why they want representative Indians to appear before the Joint Committee if the Round Table Conference itself was not thus restricted in its membership. Bapu had said in so many words that he would not grant even provincial autonomy. But Shastri thought otherwise and had the temerity to take Bapu to task.

I asked Bapu if Shastri would now realize that he was wrong in making the kind of speech he delivered on the last day of the Conference.

'No', he replied. 'Even now perhaps he thinks that the position would have been different if I had joined hands

with their party. And there is reason for it. He is a straightforward man, and straightforward men are capable of any amount of self-deception. People often say that I too am often guilty of deceiving myself. When I mercy-killed that calf, I thought I was practising the purest *ahimsa*. But how could I then be aware of all the possible consequences of my act ? If I was wrong, I would be falling back in my practice of *ahimsa*. If I was right, I would be making more progress in that direction. But it is quite possible that I was deceiving myself that day.'

I : My question is this : Does not Shastri now realize that his faith in the British was ill-placed and that you were right after all ?

Bapu : If he had any such realization, his language would be different from what it is and he would have profound distrust of British policy. Not that he would become a civil resister like ourselves. But he would put forth the demand that I should be released, and declare that I was right. Gokhale often used to tell his co-workers that I have a wonderful power of reaching a compromise. So should Shastri tell the British. They do not understand this, nor have they any grasp of my position as regards untouchability. The communal award will be a real test for MacDonald.

The Sardar : Has he not been weighed and found wanting already ? Only today Hoare quoted his words and interpreted them in his own manner. Is it possible that he did so without consulting him or that MacDonald spoke the other day without consulting Hoare beforehand ?

Bapu : No. You cannot blame MacDonald on that score. Hoare has taken the Indian question off his hands and takes such action as he pleases. He tells his fellows in the Cabinet that they will lose India if he is not given a free hand. But the communal decision is MacDonald's own responsibility. He offered to arbitrate himself, and is now to declare the award on behalf of the British Government. Hoare has his own solution of the question, but on this point the initiative rests with MacDonald who has to play the role of a judge. Let us see what he does.

Bapu wrote out the whole of Isha Upanishad. I asked him why. He said, 'I wish to learn it by heart. We cannot carry a big tome from place to place, but this copy will be quite handy.'

Bapu showed me the following verse from the Shvetashvatara Upanishad :

यदा चर्मवदाकाशं वेष्टयिष्यन्ति मानवाः ।
तदा देवमविज्ञाय दुःखस्यान्तो भविष्यति ॥

and said, 'This verse shows what a wonderful intelligence our people had when it was written. Man's sorrows can have no end until he has known the Supreme Soul. The impossibility of the one without the other is brought out by the illustration that a person can never wrap his body with the sky as with the skin of a deer. This verse can be interpreted in many more ways. But even its literal meaning is grand indeed.'

As a matter of fact the Soul has been dealt with in these two Upanishads in a manner that has no parallel in the rest of the world.

JULY 16, 1932

One of us wondered why lawyers as well as other classes among our people did not understand that the whole administration would break down if only a single class non-co-operated with it *en masse*. Hoare was happy so long as the police and the army were with him. If these non-co-operated, he might perhaps be shocked. In 1921 we were somewhat nearer our goal. 'No', said Bapu. 'It was all superficial. The fact is that we are not ready for Swaraj even if it is offered today as on a plate. Its establishment would be signalized by a terrible civil war. I feel that as a result of their present experience our people will have greater faith in *ahimsa*. The temple of Swaraj is being built, brick by brick, stone by stone. To reach and carry out decisions as to how we are to deal with the present situation — what is this if it is not Swaraj? But we are unable to see it as it is still to be crowned by a dome.'

The whole of the Ashram post was delivered to us today after making us wait for four days.

JULY 17, 1932

The following from the *Imitation of Christ* is worthy of being written in letters of gold and studied both in the morning and in the evening :

" The devil sleepeth not, neither is the flesh yet dead ; therefore thou must not cease to prepare thyself for the battle ; for on the right hand and on the left are enemies that never rest."

Bapu disposed of the Ashram post almost single-handed. He wrote six and dictated twelve letters.

To Devadas he wrote : 'The delivery of our post is nowadays very irregular, as it has to pass through several hands. But that I get it at all is something to be thankful for, for a prisoner has no rights. Imprisonment implies the deprivation of all rights. I understand this and thus preserve mental tranquillity. The position as regards interviews is the same. You will probably be able to see Mahadev, but no time-table can be made as you propose. You must run the risk of not being granted an interview, or give up the idea of seeing him altogether. I would have been glad to see Lakshmi and you. But I have no doubt that I have done the right thing in refusing to see anybody else so long as I cannot see Mirabehn. The deepest shock will be felt by Ba, but suffering has been her companion all along. All who enjoy relations with me have to pay a heavy price for them. The heaviest price has of course been paid by Ba. But I do not think she has incurred any loss in so doing.'

Prayer was the subject of Bapu's this week's letter to the Ashram as well as another letter. After stressing the need of individual prayer in the first letter he continued :

'A person must shed all spiritual dirt at prayer time. As he is ashamed of doing anything immoral while other people are looking on, so should he be in the presence of God. But God knows our every act and every thought.

There is not a single moment when we can think any thought or do any act unknown to Him. He who thus prays from the bottom of his heart will in time be filled with the spirit of God and become sinless.'

In the other letter he wrote :

'A prayer can be offered in connection with some person or thing, and may even be granted. But if it is offered without any such specific end in view, it will confer a greater benefit on the world as well as ourselves. Prayer exerts an influence over ourselves ; our soul becomes more vigilant, and the greater its vigilance, the wider the sphere of its influence. Prayer is a function of the heart. We speak aloud in order to wake it up. The Power that pervades the universe is also present in the human heart. The body does not offer it any obstruction. The obstruction is something of our own making, and is removed by prayer. We can never know if a prayer has or has not yielded the desired result. I may pray for Narmada's relief from pain ; even if she is free from pain afterwards, I must not assume that that is due to my prayer. Prayer is never fruitless, but we cannot know what the fruit of it is. Nor should we imagine that it is a good thing if it yields the desired result. Here too the Gita doctrine has to be practised. We may pray for something and yet remain free from attachment. We may pray for some one's *mukti* (salvation) but should not worry whether he gets or does not get what we want for him. Even if the result is just the opposite of what we had asked for, that is no reason for the conclusion that the prayer has been fruitless.'

JULY 18, 1932

A long letter from Esther in which she said what a fine thing it would be if she could trust God as much as her daughters trusted her. The kittens surround us every morning, ask for milk and make great noise if they do not get it. This scene is for me a constant reminder that we must trust in God.

Bapu wrote to Esther a letter, part of which betrays Bapu's western mode of thought in many minor details :

"You tell me how desolate Bajaj's house looked for want of the woman's touch. I have always considered this the result of our false notions of division of work between men and women. Division there must be. But this utter helplessness on the man's part when it comes to keeping a household in good order and woman's helplessness when it comes to be a matter of looking after herself (more here than in the West) are due to erroneous upbringing. Why should a man be so lazy as not to keep his house neat, if there is no woman looking after it or why should a woman feel that she always needs a man protector? This anomaly seems to me to be due to the habit of regarding woman as fit primarily for housekeeping and of thinking that she must live so soft as to feel weak and be always in need of protection. We are trying to create a different atmosphere at the Ashram. It is difficult work. But it seems to be worth doing."

A Bengali wrote a long letter in which he laid down the proposition that the leaders were responsible for the intolerable distress in which the people found themselves. To him Bapu replied:

"I thank you for your letter. You know it is not open to me to argue about matters political. But I can heartily endorse your remark that all the leaders must bear the consequences of their actions."

JULY 19, 1932

Clayton visited us today. He is very sweet-spoken, always referring to Mahatma Gandhi and the Sardar Saheb. He brought flowers for Sarojini Devi from his wife and gave Bapu a carnation from his button-hole. He said if he were Samuel Hoare, he would say to the Liberals, 'Well, if you do not want anything, I will not offer anything either.' He asked Bapu if smoking was a vice. Bapu smiled and said it was a bad habit. Clayton said, "No, no. It keeps you away from mischief as the charkha does. When I come to jail and don't smoke — as I don't — I have a bad day, losing my temper and feeling out of sorts."

A letter from Mirabehn from Chhapra. She was there served with a notice to leave the place within 12 hours. The notice expired at midnight, and she took the train for Benares the next morning. Yet she was not arrested. In Benares she went out for a walk on the bank of the Ganga :

"Yesterday morning I had a heavenly early morning walk by the bank of the Ganga. People may laugh at the idea of there being anything special about holy places — but they should just take that walk with their eyes open. The Ganga blue and sparkling with the golden tints of the rising sun as he catches her little wavelets breaking themselves with the voice of happy bells against the velvety grey sandbank ; the azure sky overhead, intensified with the lightly gathering rain clouds ; the exquisitely soft air pressing in caressing wafts across the fields ; and the mighty trees, finer than one sees anywhere else, stretching their venerable arms to heaven, and joining in the morning hymn of praise with the rustling of their myriad leaves. All thought of self was swept away and one rejoiced and felt one's being throb in oneness with the whole of nature."

Mirabehn is not only a devotee ; she is a poet and painter too.

Finished the diary of Count Keyserling, a strange sort of man, a free thinker free from anxiety. He appears to have undertaken to defend even the indefensible, as for instance untouchability among Hindus, gambling and taking everything for food in China, prostitution in Japan. He asks why a fetish should be made of purity and where was the harm if a sister sold herself to a brothel in order to make it possible for her brother by her earnings to fight for his country ! However he has some wise thoughts, some insight and the power of observation.

Here is his excellent definition of a *yogi* :

"A mystic is a contemplative man, whose life emanates from within, who lives in the essence of things and for that essence alone, whose consciousness has taken root in Atman, and who accordingly is completely truthful

and pours out his inmost being without any inhibition. Such a man cannot deny any expression of life."

Keyserling has an intelligent explanation of the worship of many gods in India :

" Not a single sage of India, not even Buddha, has opposed popular belief in gods. Most of them, above all Shankara, the founder of radical monism, subscribed to this belief themselves. They were so conscious, on the one hand, of the inexpressibility of divinity, and on the other of the infinite number of possible manifestations, that generally they preferred the manifold expression to the simple one."

He quotes from *Chandimahatmya* to illustrate the Hindu idea of God :

" I am reminded of the famous hymn to Mahadevi in which she the goddess is revered as Ishvara, the highest being, then as the Ganga, then as the Sarasvati, and again as Lakshmi, where in one verse, after declaring that she dwells in all the beings of the world, in the form of peace, power, reason, memory, professional competence, abundance, mercy, humility, hunger, sleep, faith, beauty, and consciousness, it is added that she also dwells in every creature in the form of *error*. It seems to me that this multiplicity in its connected form is a better expression of what the pious Indian means, than any single formula could be, however profound."

About Mrs. Besant he says :

" This woman controls her being from a centre which, to my knowledge, only very few men have ever attained to. Her importance is due to the depth of her being, from which she rules her talents. She controls herself, her powers, her thoughts, her feelings, her volition, so perfectly, that she seems to be capable of greater achievements than men of greater gifts. She owes this to Yoga. If Yoga is capable of so much, it may be capable of even more, and thus appears entitled to one of the highest places among the paths to self-perfection.....The inner truth of this significance (of yogic practice) is so obvious that I am

surprised that Yoga practice has not long ago been introduced into the curriculum of every educational institution. There is no doubt that the strengthening of all the forces of life is the function of their heightened concentration, and concentration signifies undoubtedly the technical basis of all progress.....Concentration undoubtedly is the way of perfection.....The value of the second aim of yogic training, that of silencing the involuntary psychic activity, is equally convincing. Every superfluous activity wastes strength.....All strong minds are marked by the fact that they are not fidgety, that they can relax and contract at will, and that they can give their attention to one problem more continuously than weak minds. It is unbelievable how important for our inner growth the shortest periods of meditation are, provided they are practised regularly. A few minutes of conscious abstraction every morning effect more than the severest training of the attention through work. This explains amongst other things the strengthening effect of prayer."

But Keyserling is not a believer in miraculous powers (*siddhi*) and says:

"Every diseased condition is an absolute evil....The teachers of antiquity put down as an essential condition prior to accepting a pupil, that he should have perfect health, an irreproachable nervous system and a robust moral nature.....The Yogi is essentially healthy, he is the unquestioned master of his nerves, he is always in equilibrium, and normal in every way......The Indian yogi is an enemy of castigation, he never mortifies the flesh."

As regards the master and disciple relation in religion he strangely says that no great man can be a disciple:

"Eminent individuals can never be disciples; it is physiologically impossible for them. No matter how capable they may be of submitting to an ideal, an institution or an objective spirit, their pride, and not only their pride, but above all, their inner truthfulness, would prevent them from following a living man, not as a duly accredited representative, but a man as such. While they

behold only a man subject to human failings and weaknesses, they cannot believe in divinity. Even in India *par excellence* the land of faith, no founder of religion of whom I have heard has mentally important disciples during his life-time. The first who swarm around a new centre of belief are, without exception, poor in spirit and superstitious, for they want above all to be led." (!)

But as a matter of fact there has hardly been any great saint in India who had not a master to guide him; Ramakrishna had a master in Totapuri and a disciple in Vivekanand, and in ancient times Shankara was a disciple of Gaudapada.

Keyserling is sound in his answer to the question: What is a saviour ? :

" No teacher can give what is not existent in a latent state, he can only waken that which is asleep, he can liberate what is imprisoned and bring to light what has been concealed. They never give anything, they merely set free that which is in us......It is a superstition to believe that the saviours as such, as definite human beings are saviours......They were only releasers of certain qualities, they were effective as the pure embodiment of their ideal......Weak men feel happy in seeing in the great soul of another their own natures adequately expressed at last, as it were in a mirror......A great man shows men what every one could be, what all men are at bottom. in spirit and in truth."

How accurately does this depict Bapu's work !

Keyserling's description of Chittodgadh is never to be forgotten :

" The proudest memories of the proud Rajputs are connected with Chittod, and that means that perhaps no place on earth has been the scene of equal heroism, knightliness, or an equally noble readiness to die. Here Budhsingh, the head of the Deolia Pratapgadh fell in the fight against Bahadurshah of Gujarat; it was here that Padmini, the beautiful queen for whose sake Alaudin Khilji stormed the fortress, sought and found death in the flames, together with all the Rajput women, when all hope

of victory had vanished, while Bhimsingh died with the whole of his tribe on the walls. Here the bride of Jaymalla of Bednor fought side by side with her husband against legions of the great Akbar. How strange it is to breathe in an atmosphere in India whose essence is historical!"

He says that the Christian is a slave to logic, tends to think that he himself is right and others are wrong, and thus incurs the enmity of the world; in Hinduism on the other hand there is provision for every type of human soul:

"The Bhagavadgita, perhaps the most beautiful work of the literature of the world, appears to many as a philosophically worthless compilation, because a great many different directions of thought affirm themselves within it simultaneously. To the Indian, the Bhagavadgita seems to be absolutely unified in spirit. Shankaracharya, the founder of Advaita philosophy, the most radical form of monism which has ever existed, was in practice a dualist, that is to say, a supporter of Sankhya-yoga during the whole of his life, and a polytheist in his religious practice. How was this possible? Shankara's logical competence is beyond all question. But he was more than a mere logician. Thus it seemed a matter of course to him, that different means should be used for different ends. In practice no one gets beyond dualism; it is impossible to think, wish, strive for, act at all without implicitly postulating duality. Why then deny it? It alters nothing......

"Are the Indians then eclectics? Indeed they are not. They are only the opposite of rationalists. They do not suffer from the superstition that metaphysical truths are capable of an exhaustive embodiment in any logical system; they know that spiritual reality can never be determined by one, but if at all, by several intellectual co-ordinates. The fact that monism and dualism contradict each other means just as little in this connection as the contradiction between the English and the metric system."

Keyserling has some wise things to say about the nature of Buddha:

"The reason for their significance is that the word in them did not remain the word, but became flesh; and that

is the utmost which can be attained. To appear wise nothing is needed but the actor's talent ; to be wise in the ordinary sense, it only requires a prominent mind. Before a man turns into a Buddha, the highest which he has recognized must have become the central propelling force of his whole life, must have gained the power of direct control over matter."

And about the Indian method of communicating spiritual knowledge :

"The disciple is to sink himself, as it were, into the phrase (गुरुमंत्र) until it has taken possession of his soul. He has to reach a new level of consciousness."

According to Keyserling two books have had a profound influence on Chinese civilization : the Book of Reverence, and the Book of Rites :

"Reverence is reverence before that which is above us, that which is below us, and that which is like us ; indeed, reverence before everything which exists appears to this outlook as the very basis of all virtue and all wisdom. And that is really what it is. One only does justice to that which one takes absolutely seriously. For this reason politeness is not something essentially external, but the most elemental expression of morality. Whereas virtue and kindness may not be fairly demanded of everybody, the formal acceptance of another personality can be demanded. This gives its profound acceptance to courtesy."

This 'reverence' I notice in Bapu at all times, and in hardly any one else.

"The Book of Rites asserts that man can only become inwardly perfect if he expresses himself perfectly outwardly. This is the reason why the Chinaman has a fundamental sense of etiquette. The marvellous courtesy to be seen in China is the flower of Confucianism."

Here is a living picture of Chinese rural life :

"Every inch of soil is in cultivation, carefully manured, well and professionally tilled, right up to the highest tops of the hills. Wherever I cast my eyes, I see the peasants at work, methodically, thoughtfully, contentedly. It is they who everywhere give life to the wide plain.

The blue of their jerkins is as much part of the picture as the green of the tilled fields and the bright yellow of the dried up river beds. There is hardly a plot of ground which does not carry numerous grave mounds; again and again the plough must piously wend its way between the tombstones. There is no other peasantry in the world which gives an impression of absolute genuineness and of belonging so much to the soil. Here the whole of life and the whole of death takes place on the inherited ground. Man belongs to the soil, not the soil to the man; it will never let its children go. However much they may increase in number, they remain upon it, wringing from nature her scanty gifts by ever more assiduous labour; and when they are dead they return in childlike confidence to what is to them the real womb of their mother. And there they continue to live for evermore. The Chinese peasant, like the prehistoric Greek, believes in the life of what seems dead to us. The soil exhales the spirit of his ancestors, it is they who repay his labour and who punish him for his omissions. Thus, the inherited fields are at the same time his history, his memory, his reminiscences; he can deny it as little as he can deny himself, for he is only a part of it......"

Talking about Japanese art, Keyserling gives a good definition of taste:

"An all-embracing religion and philosophy which denies nothing can only originate from the Asian attitude to the world; it alone makes a perfect social organization possible in principle; only the man endowed with the Asian's feeling for the world will possess taste in the highest sense. For what else is taste but clear consciousness of proportion? The man whose eyes have been trained in Japan will only rarely want to open them in Europe. How barbaric is our habit of overloading? How seldom does an object stand in the place which correlation appoints to it? How obtrusive our pictures are? And how rarely is a European aware that a room exists for the man, and not vice versa, that he, and not the curtain or the picture, is to be given his best possible setting? A Japanese temple

is designed in its setting, it cannot in fact be dissociated from it......It is characteristic that the Japanese loses his taste as soon as he assumes European manners and European dress."

Keyserling appears to have made an excellent study of Eastern scriptures. All the quotations from the Gita and the Upanishads are correct and based upon the memory. There is one fine extract from Lao-tse :

"Heaven is eternal and the earth enduring.
The cause of the eternal duration of heaven and earth is,
That they do not live unto themselves,
Therefore they can give life continuously."

Keyserling has explained very well why Buddha and Christ live on through all eternity :

"Most people are really dead before their death, that is to say, they cease to be the bearers of consciousness no matter whether they continue to exist objectively ; there are only a few who continue beyond a limited period. If, however, a man arises who knows how to incarnate a fundamental world-idea in his person, as Buddha and Christ succeeded in doing, then he goes on living through all eternity."

His views on the existence of evil in the universe betray profound thought :

"Now it is certain that evil has its definite and necessary function in the economy of the world. Destruction alone prepares the way for a radical innovation. If there is to be serious progress then the natural processes of growth and decay must occasionally be accelerated. Only revolution explodes old rigid forms ; only the premature end of generations, such as war brings about, rends the thread of fettering tradition. World-embracing cultures would never have come to exist if one species of men had not subjugated others and thus raised certain forms out of the jungle of wild luxuriance to predominance. Last and not least death and killing are normal processes of nature......The Indian myth according to which creation and destruction are correlative attributes of the deity is

apparently very near to the truth ; at times evil is divinely ordained. Only man should not usurp the position of Shiva ; what is befitting to Him, man may not desire deliberately ; the inevitability of death does not justify the murderer. Just as birth and natural death are beyond the sphere of personal volition, so does the general scheme according to which the whole life evolves stand above individual judgement.

.....But men only do rarely what they ought to do, all the more rarely the more consciously they act. And where they undertake to determine events, believing themselves to know the plan of the whole, they work mischief. It leads to insensate wars, to all-exterminating revolutions ; the self-regulation of nature is destroyed and folly gains the victory. In this way white men have made havoc upon earth in many many, in all too many directions...... Violence practised on living beings is always evil, every act of violence as such is a blow in the face of justice, and the most just execution of penalty offends the moral sense in some way or other. And yet, somehow sometimes it is possible to realize the beneficial quality of what is evil in itself, not only in small matters, but even on a great scale. History teaches that the most violent tribes have often developed into cultured nations with the highest moral outlook. Physical superiority is only durable upon a moral basis. Without courage strength achieves nothing, without readiness for sacrifice discipline, organization, even courage is of no avail."

He gives a good picture of American democracy in a single sentence :

" The universal franchise has recalled to life the right of physical might in a refined form ; through playing upon moods and instincts, through suggestion and the mechanical result of clever intrigues, it is now being decided who is to govern, and this method of arriving at a decision differs from the method of the days of robber-knights, precisely as seduction differs from violation."

Keyserling's diary is a thought-compelling book to be read in as leisurely a fashion as it has been written.

In an article today Horniman described Lord Irwin as an agile opportunist who covered his change of principle with a thick veneer of hypocritical professions of sincerity. Commenting on this Bapu said, 'I cannot agree with him. Irwin is sincere in the sense that he is not cunning and says what he thinks. He did not like the idea of the Simon Commission, but he thought that as a Conservative he should not oppose the deliberate policy of the Home Government. There is a limit to his sincerity; he cannot bear the idea of liquidating the British empire. If this last is in danger, Irwin would not mind even pledges being broken. Like every other Conservative he believes the British empire is a wonderful creation of God, and considers every question in the light of this faith. But we do not care whether he is or is not sincere. We must only see whether we do or do not get what we want.'

Satavlekar wrote a long letter to Bapu saying that there was not only great poetry in the eleventh chapter of the Gita as Bapu had made out, but also the vital truth that God is immanent in all created objects which are only different parts of His body. To him Bapu replied:

'You are right, but that makes no difference as regards my introduction to that chapter. One who looks upon the universe as various facets of God will certainly have the beatific vision. But what he sees will be a creation of his own imagination. A Christian who looks upon the universe as God will see a Christlike image. A man sees God as he worships Him. A Hindu will always draw fresh inspiration from the eleventh chapter, and if he is a devotee (*bhakta*) he will see God as He has been there described. But what he sees will have no existence except in his own imagination. God is without form, but He assumes form for His devotee. That is His *maya*, or poetry. The whole thing boils down to this: We have to see God even in the thief and the robber. If we can thus see God in him, he will give up his thievish propensities. All our knowledge and spiritual exercises are fruitless so long as we have not had this vision.

'The differences of opinion among scholars and sects as regards the interpretation of Vedic *mantras* are bewildering. In view of my little knowledge of Sanskrit, it is not for me to decide which interpretation is right, although I select one interpretation as the right one for myself. The Gita gives me full satisfaction. But still I do like to dabble in the Vedas now and then.'

JULY 20, 1932

Narandas Gandhi writes to say that no post has been received in the Ashram for two weeks. The children have therefore stopped writing to Bapu. He remarked: 'I cannot now give each of them a weekly lesson in half a dozen lines as I used to.'

My letter of the 11th is said to have been posted on the 14th but was not received at the Ashram till the 18th. But that is the least part of what life in jail means. When we read the descriptions of life in Russian jails compiled by Upton Sinclair, we feel that jail in India is no jail at all. Comparatively speaking we have few hardships.

The Sardar is making excellent progress in his study of Sanskrit. He would ask me, 'Mahadev, what is *vibhakti* (case)? And if we can say नृपः, why cannot we similarly say राजः and विद्वानः?' But today even he was deeply impressed by the verses on *brahmacharya* from the Mahabharat. I said, 'There is perhaps no language so musical as Sanskrit, and *brahmacharya* has been dealt with in Sanskrit literature as nowhere else.' Bapu replied: 'I am not sure about the music. Greek and Latin also may be musical, but hardly any other literature lays the same emphasis on *brahmacharya* and truth as Sanskrit does.'

Here are the verses from Anushasana Parva:

न तपस्तप अित्याहुर्ब्रह्मचर्यं तपोत्तमम्।
ऊर्ध्वरेता भवेद्यस्तु स देवो न तु मानुषः॥
आजन्ममरणाद्यस्तु ब्रह्मचारी भवेदिह।
न तस्य किञ्चिदप्राप्यमिति विद्धि नराधिप॥
पंचविंशतिपर्यंतं ब्रह्मचर्यं समाचरेत्।
गुणवान् शक्तिसंपन्नः शतायुस्तु भविष्यति॥

कायेन मनसा वाचा सर्वावस्थासु सर्वदा।
सर्वत्र मैथुनत्यागो ब्रह्मचर्यं विधीयते॥
यदीच्छसि वशीकर्तुं जगदेकेन कर्मणा।
सुदुर्वृत्तेन्द्रियग्रामं बलाच्छीघ्रं निवारय॥

JULY 21, 1932

Today Bapu saw Chhaganlal Joshi, Shankar and Dr Mukund. He then said, 'Chhaganlal gave me one interesting piece of news. There are now two Pathan youths among the Congress prisoners who came when the riots were in full swing in Bombay. They are very good fellows and have created a nice impression. Chhaganlal also said Ramdas is very sad, because he found some cardamoms hidden in the tooth powder sent to him. They were destroyed as soon as received, but Ramdas is still worried about the matter. I asked Chhaganlal if the jail authorities had been informed about it. He said no.'

Bapu himself told the Superintendent about this. That very day some one had received chillies hidden in a bottle of hingu-ashtak (laxative powder containing asafoetida and other drugs). Bapu then said, 'What is the use of blaming others when there is something rotten in my own house? Poor Ramdas is not at fault, but the person who sent him the cardamoms certainly is.' 'Never mind,' said the Superintendent. 'There is no reason for Ramdas to brood over the incident.'

Mirabehn is ill in Banaras. She referred in her letter to the careful nursing which she was receiving. To her Bapu wrote:

"We never know when we commit a breach of the laws that govern the body. And in nature as in human law ignorance is no excuse. Your fever therefore does not surprise me. I expect that the energetic remedy adopted by you checked the progress of malaria. Yes, at such times the services of friends become a boon and induce an early recovery. I know what lavish care is bestowed upon guests in Shivaprasad Babu's home. I am glad you are having those sweet experiences. It makes attacks such as you had not

only bearable but even a prize visitation in that they enable one to understand human nature at its best. And when it acts equally towards all and in all circumstances, it approaches the divine."

JULY 22, 1932

I asked Bapu last night if Birla's statement was sufficient for the purpose. 'No,' said Bapu, 'because he has not answered the question that has been put. He said they had resigned from the Consultative Committee, but that does not account for their refusal to endorse the liberal resolution. It is possible that they laid down more stringent conditions for co-operation than the liberals, and these were not acceptable to that party. Then again he does not reply to the question whether he is in correspondence with Hoare.'

Shri Purushottamdas Thakurdas' statement today confirms Bapu's conjecture. His conditions for co-operation were more stringent than the liberals'. He would not be satisfied with a mere revival of the Round Table Conference method. And he has not written to Hoare after his return from England.

JULY 23, 1932

The Superintendent had said that Joshi and Gangabehn Vaidya would be permitted to see me, but when they came last evening, he told them they could not see me. The reason is that they are both active Congress workers and the Superintendent was afraid of letting them interview me. And there was of course the rule in the Jail Manual that only relations could see prisoners. Joshi had met Bapu only the previous day and the Superintendent had not objected. But he objected in my case. He was afraid of giving us Fisher's *The Thin Little Man Gandhi*. He therefore sent it to Government. I think that is all to the good. For if he had read it, he would not have had the courage to give it to us. On the other hand if the book falls into the hands of some wise member of the Secretariat, he may find the book harmless and pass it on to us.

As he was going to bed, Bapu said, 'Vallabhbhai, do you know if we have been swallowing a bitter draught as regards our Gujarati letters?' The Sardar asked how that was so. Bapu replied English letters could be sent at once but there was difficulty about Gujarati letters. It was an insult that the Englishmen did not trust any Indian. These letters were therefore translated into English, and would be passed only when the translation was passed. This was an intolerable state of things and they must fight it out with Government. The fight would consist in a declaration on their part that they would not write letters on such a condition. The Sardar said it would only be a good riddance for Government if they did not write any Gujarati letters. 'Yes,' said Bapu. 'But we must not mind it.' I said, 'We need not consider what they say or whether or not they are impressed by our action. But this is not on all fours with Mirabehn's case, in which a vital principle is involved. Here they say the letters could be passed soon if written in English. But if they are not written in English, they will have to be examined by some one else. If however Government insist on the letters being written in English, we could not comply with any such requirement.' Bapu observed: 'They do indirectly ask us to write in English.' I said I thought that the defect about which Bapu complained was inherent in the rule itself. Bapu replied that was so. But why should they put up with it? Was it because of their self-interest?

JULY 24, 1932

Last evening's discussion was resumed at the morning walk today. The Sardar was asked for his opinion and said, 'It would be better to stop writing letters at all rather than continue to write letters like this. But it will not make any impression on the Government.' Bapu said they should not mind it, although abstention was bound to produce its effect in the long run. He then asked me what was my view of the matter. I said, 'If we agree to our English letters being examined by them, why not agree also to Gujarati letters being translated? The translator's

business is to translate, not to express his opinion of the translated letter.' 'You are right,' said Bapu. 'But I do not suggest they should invite the translator to express his opinion. They should call a trustworthy officer and ask him to go through these letters. And the Gujarati letters should be passed and sent in exactly the same way as the English letters. But the fact is that they do not trust their own officers, so that they want everything to be translated into English and made available for their inspection. This is most insulting. General Botha knew English; it was in his interest to talk in English. Still he said, "No, I will speak only in Dutch." No one in South Africa had advised him to speak in Dutch, but he thought of it spontaneously. So should it be with us. It is not as if we cannot do without writing those letters. It is no part of our duty to write them. We write them for our own satisfaction and in order to comfort others. But if that means disparagement of our language and want of trust in our people, we must stop writing them. Is it not a terrible thing to contemplate for instance that a man may be expecting to receive a letter from me on his death-bed and may be dead before the letter meant for him reaches him? Government might say they have not sufficient staff. But in this case instead of leaving it to some trustworthy officer, they want to examine the letters themselves. For my part I am angry at the Government's distrust of this Superintendent and Jailer. But we are helpless as they have no guts.' Turning to the Sardar, he continued, 'You will come across the distinction between *shreyas* (The salutary) and *preyas* (The pleasant) in Sanskrit. *Preyas* in the present case is to continue writing the Gujarati letters, and *shreyas* asks us to stop writing.'

Bapu sent 19 letters to the Ashram today but informed all his correspondents that they should not be anxious if they received no more letters; that would be a sign of *anasakti* (detachment).

To Prabhudas Bapu wrote on God and Truth: 'I need not say anything more about Truth. As regards God it is difficult to define Him; but the definition of truth is

deposited in every human heart. Truth is that which you believe to be true at this moment, and that is your God. If a man worships this relative truth, he is sure to attain the absolute truth, i.e. God in course of time. The same doctrine is taught in the Vedas, selections from which I am reading at present. All reading is fruitless so long as we have not learnt to live a truthful life. A lover of truth will not try to appear different from what he is. His thoughts, words and actions will be harmonious. This condition is easy to attain for those who recognize truth as God. Bulky tomes do not need to be consulted in order to live truthfully. Ponder over this verse of the Isha Upanishad :

* हिरण्मयेन पात्रेण सत्यस्यापिहितं मुखम् ।
तत्त्वं पूषन्नपावृणु सत्यधर्माय दृष्टये ॥'

To Puratan Buch Bapu wrote : 'I warned you not in order to prevent you from asking questions but to make you look within. When we have grasped the fundamental principle, we should be able to apply it to any given set of circumstances. If we cannot do this, it means that our grasp of first principles is feeble. It is like geometry, in which we can solve all problems based on a theorem we have mastered.'

To Kapil he wrote : ' Plying the *takli* (spindle) is a piece of service. So is teaching the children or conducting a night school for the adults in your neighbourhood. Self-purification and the attempt to prevent the entry of a single impure thought into the mind, — this too is service in my opinion, and is within the reach even of a man on sickbed.'

X asked, 'Can a man who resorts to untruth for worldly purposes see God ? Or is the beatific vision possible for one who gives up all activities in order to be able to observe the law of truth ? ' To him Bapu replied, 'One who resorts to untruth with any end in view whatsoever and is full of likes and dislikes can never attain the Supreme. Your second question deals with an impossibility. To tread the

* 'The face of truth is hidden under a lid of burnished gold; O God, lay it bare for me the seeker after truth.' *Ed.*

path of truth and to eschew all activity — this is a contradiction in terms. If a man is not active, how can we say anything about the path he has taken? To tread the path of truth implies an active life in the world of men. In the absence of such activity, there is no occasion for either pursuing or swerving from truth. The Gita has made it clear that a man cannot remain inactive even for a single moment. The difference between one who is a devotee of God and another who is not is that the former is active in the service of others, never gives up truth in the midst of activity and gradually overcomes his likes and dislikes, while the other is active for selfish reasons and has no scruples whatever as regards the means he employs in order to achieve his selfish ends. This world is not something evil in itself, for only an active life in the world can help us to attain the goal of God-realization. This activity must be directed to the good of others. Selfish activity is fit only to be condemned and should be given up.'

To Soniramji Bapu wrote: '*Yajnopavita* (the sacred thread) is supposed to be full of mystical meaning, but it is all imaginary. Those who started the practice of wearing it knew nothing of it. The Aryans wore it in order to distinguish themselves from the non-Aryans. It was in those days that the art of weaving cotton cloth was acquired by man. The non-Aryans wore only a *dhoti* (loincloth) and were otherwise bare-bodied. The Aryans adopted the *yajnopavita* as their distinctive mark to encourage hand-spinning and to show that it was a sacred act. This is only my theory; I have no historical evidence to support it. There is and ought to be now no such distinction as Aryan and non-Aryan who have been welded together for thousands of years. If one man wears the thread, all the rest must have the right to wear it. Therefore I see no sense in investing people with it, and when one thread was worn out I did not try to replace it with a new one. If the thread is responsible for the distinction of high and low, it is fit only to be cast away. I would ask Gauriprasad not to have anything to do with it. The thread is the distinguishing mark for a *brahmachari*

(celibate student). If one keeps the observance of chastity, the observance in itself is the best of threads; what is the use of a cotton string?'

To Kaka Bapu wrote as follows on the study of the heavens: 'My interest in the subject is of a different kind. When we look at the sky, we have a conception of infinity, cleanliness, orderliness and grandeur which is purifying for us. Man may land on planets and stars and find that life there is much the same as on earth. But their beauty radiates ineffable peace from a distance. When once we are in tune with the sky, the nature of our environment on earth ceases to have any significance for us. The constant presence of the sky is like the Ganga springing up wherever we are. It is on this account that I have become a keen watcher of the sky, and am trying to acquire just enough knowledge of it to satisfy my peculiar curiosity.'

JULY 25, 1932

Major Mehta: What is going to happen at Ottawa?

The Sardar: They have gone to Canada for nothing. Let them do everything they want by means of ordinances here. Where is the need for undertaking a voyage of 10,000 miles?

Bapu prepared a letter to be sent to Doyle about our correspondence. But the Superintendent was unnerved and said, 'Please do not send any such letter. It may lead them to suppose that the Indians in charge of this prison had complained to you.' The letter therefore was not sent today. The psychology of fear is wonderful indeed. You try to help a man to stand up on his feet, and he will refuse to stand up.

X again argued in favour of birth control if only to prevent the birth of weakly and diseased progeny. To him Bapu replied: 'I cannot see my way to agree to the necessity of it in any case whatever. It is possible that ancient traditions exercise an influence over me without my being conscious of it, but the reasons which inspire my opposition to this practice are still valid. We can see with

our own eyes the harm done by artificial methods. Those who practise them will lose what little vitality they have at present. The whole train of thought which underlies birth control is erroneous and dangerous. Its supporters claim that a man has not only the right, but it is his duty to satisfy the animal instinct, and that his development would be arrested if he did not discharge this duty. I think this claim is false. It is idle to expect self-restraint from one who takes to artificial methods. In fact birth control is advocated on the ground that restraint of animal passion is an impossibility. To say that such restraint is impossible or unnecessary or harmful is the negation of all religion. For the whole superstructure of religion rests on the foundations of self-control. There are many straightforward, simple and harmless ways in which the birth of feeble progeny can be prevented. Why reject all of them and resort to such a dangerous thing as birth-control? That it is a risky thing is admitted by almost all parties. I am therefore inclined to think that artificial methods are worthy of condemnation. I suggest that you fully think over the subject in jail where you have ample time at your disposal. After you have done this, I do not mind what conclusions you reach; for your straightforwardness will help to save you from error. On the other hand if I am mistaken, you will be able to correct my mistake. If you feel that birth control is a duty, you will not rest until you have brought me round to your view. And I am easy to deal with. I may firmly adhere to a particular view, but if I find it mistaken, I give it up at once.'

JULY 26, 1932

The letter to Doyle about correspondence was sent today. Bapu assured the Superintendent that it was not open to objection on the ground he feared. The Superintendent proposed that Bapu should make it clear that he was not referring to the jail authorities. But Bapu pointed out that that was the surest way of making Government believe that the letter was written at their suggestion. He therefore held that the letter should go in the form in

which it was naturally written. As a matter of fact he was of opinion that this was an issue on which the Superintendent ought to resign his post if he had any self-respect. But we as a nation were lost to any such keen sense of honour. If therefore the officer was himself unable to take such resolute action, he should permit Bapu at least to enter his protest.

A big bundle of letters which were received by Government on the 8th was given to us today. All those letters were important and should have been replied to at once.

There was a heart-rending letter from Shirinbai, the sister of the missing airman. His 72-year-old mother was still alive; and his only brother had been in a London nursing home for 8 years. The sister had picked up a little Gujarati 30 years ago, but still she took great pains and wrote a good Gujarati letter, and at the end of it requested permission to write to Bapu in English. To her Bapu replied :

'My dear sister, I received your disconsolate letter only today. It had to pass through so many hands before coming to me. My whole heart goes out to you and your aged mother. God suffers us to blame Him, to swear at Him and deny Him. We do it all in our ignorance. A very beautiful Sanskrit verse * which we recite daily at the morning prayer means : "Miseries are not miseries, nor is happiness truly happiness. True misery consists in forgetting God, true happiness consists in thinking of Him as ever enthroned in our hearts." And has not an English poet said : "Things are not what they seem"? The fact is if we knew all the laws of God we should be able to account for the unaccountable. Why should we think that withdrawal of your brother from our midst is an affliction ? We simply do not know. But we do, or ought to know that God is wholly good and wholly just. Even our illness such as your other brother's may be no misfortune. Life is a state

* विपदो नैव विपदः संपदो नैव संपदः।
वपद् विस्मरणं विष्णोः संपन्नारायणस्मृतिः॥

of discipline. We are required to go through the fire of suffering. I do so wish that you and your mother could really rejoice in your suffering. May you have peace.

'Please forget all about the honey and write to me in English by all means.' (She had sent us the honeycomb and offered to write about it in detail.)

A letter from Rajaji in which he described the circumstances in which his son-in-law had died :

"They had gone to Dr Rajan's place on his repeated invitation that they should stay with him for some time, to enable him to X-ray Papa and help a proper diagnosis of her case. The man went there in perfect health, and morbidest imagination could not have forecasted the event. He had left Rangoon in the middle of last year to join Papa and take my place as nurse. He was wonderfully attached to her and served most diligently until a few days before his death. Death is a dear friend, quite true, and not a frightful enemy as men suppose. But then, we all fight so vigorously against him on his approach, and employ all the knowledge of the ancient and the modern science to drive the friend away, that the truth is quite forgotten just when we ought to remember it most. . . . It is not grief, but darkness that is around me. I am still praying for light. I do not complain for my share of humanity's lot. Do pray for me."

To him Bapu replied as follows :

"Your touching letter of 23rd instant came into my hands today. Papa's letter I have not received yet. My correspondence is being overhauled by the authorities. There is therefore much delay and uncertainty about it. The incoming letters are delivered in good time.

"I loathe to argue about death in the face of the tragedy that has overtaken you. You will say with Job, 'Miserable comforter.' But I do feel that if we would know God, we have got to learn to rejoice in death. When Narasinha Mehta the first poet-devotee of Gujarat lost his son he is said to have joyed over it and exclaimed : 'It is well that this burden is lifted. Now I shall meet God soon.' This is an unhappy rendering of a beautiful musical verse.

May you see greater light out of this darkness. I know that you stand in no need of any comfort from any of us and that it has to come from within. This is merely an evidence of what all of us three are feeling about you."

Poor Subaiya lost his daughter on the very day that he was released from jail. To him Bapu wrote :

" I can understand your grief and hers over the loss of your child of whom Lalita used to write to me in such loving terms. But you have lived long enough in the Ashram to realize, especially on such occasions, that God has the right to take away from us what He gives us. You know what we believe. Our belief is that every one of us comes to this world as a debtor and we leave when the debt is for the time being discharged. The child has paid the debt and is free. You and Lalita and all the rest of us have still to discharge our obligations."

JULY 27, 1932

I requested the Superintendent to let Ramdas or Mohanlal see me, as I had still to exercise my right to an interview. But he said, 'I cannot permit a prisoner to go from one yard to another and still less to see another prisoner of a different class.' I said in Sabarmati prison we were allowed to do so. He was surprised at this, and the Sardar remarked, 'May be, but this jail is nearer the seat of Government.'

No Ashram post was received yesterday. There is some hitch again.

I have a great mind to read Byron's *Prisoner of Chillon*, but cannot get it here. I learnt its magnificent opening verses by heart.

It is a great pleasure to teach the Sardar Sanskrit. He asked why the poet of the Gita used the word वासांसि and not वस्त्राणि. Bapu observed that the question could be answered only by a man like Ruskin. The Sardar again intersperses his talk with little bits of Sanskrit and has added आततायी to his vocabulary.

Recommending a second marriage to X Bapu wrote : 'That is how you will some day achieve a conquest of

animal passion, which is impossible for you at present. Your anger arises from the same root. I am not surprised to find that you are a lover of delicate fare, for all these things go together. You say you are absorbed in your work. I doubt it. That is not to say that you are careless, but a man who is devoted to the performance of his duties can never be subject to the sexual urge. He would simply not have the time for it. This certainly is not your condition. It is clear that you try to be absorbed in work as also to subdue passion. But you have not succeeded in achieving any of these two aims. Evil thoughts trouble you even while you are at work. I too was in the same sorry plight. Others would not find fault with my work, as I could. The upshot was that I realized the necessity of *brahmacharya* (chastity) for aspirants after service.'

To Mrs Y: 'If you are really free from animal passion, you may meet your husband's wishes and still not satisfy him. Such is the experience of all men of the world. His dissatisfaction strengthens his desire. If you wish to live together, you should take interest in sensual enjoyment. If this is impossible for you, you should not live with him. Nothing good can come from your living together at present. You only deceive each other, yourself and the world as well. All others except myself seem to think that you are living like a monk and a nun, as you have lived in the Ashram for a time. You should escape from this untruth and each should find out a suitable mate for him and herself. To my mind your present behaviour is open to objection. If your husband marries another woman, I should think his life would become natural and hence innocent, and he will calm down in the end. With this reform in view, you should have a frank talk with each other and then with determination take what step you think fit. That way he will be able to subdue passion some time or other. As it is, he will be subject to irritation and ever increasing desire. You should not lose the talent you have got. Do not despair. May God help you.'

Relevant passages from Thomas à Kempis:

"Longstanding custom will make resistance, but by a better habit shall it be subdued.

"The flesh will complain, but by fervour of spirit shall it be kept under.

"The old serpent will instigate thee, and trouble thee anew, but by prayer he shall be put to flight; moreover, by useful employment his greater access to thee shall be prevented."

July 28, 1932

Bapu asked the Superintendent yesterday if he could get an Urdu teacher. 'Yes,' he replied. 'There may be some one in the cantonment who has been teaching Englishmen Hindustani.' Bapu asked if some one in jail could teach him. The Superintendent said in jail perhaps no one knew Urdu better than himself. He said so as he sensed that Bapu would ask for the service of some prisoner. Bapu remarked that he could not possibly impose this additional burden on the Superintendent. 'Why not ?' he asked. 'You mark all difficulties and ask me.' Today was his jail inspection day. So Bapu said he could not detain him today at any rate. 'You can,' he replied. 'I am free after nine.'

He came as he had promised. Bapu asked him the meaning of words from Shibli's *Al Faruk*. The Superintendent said at last, 'This is beyond me. If you will, I will ask Brelvi and tell you. In any case I will send you an Urdu dictionary.'

July 29, 1932

Lots of post from the Ashram. Reading it alone took two hours. The May number of the *Modern Review* has a good article with the caption 'Our Misunderstanding' dealing with the West's debt to China, India and Islam. Earnshaw's article on India in England is full of truth, careful analysis and keen observation of facts. I wish we had met him when we were in England.

The sound of drums beating was heard from outside. Bapu asked, 'What do they beat for ? Are they celebrating

a marriage ? ' I told him about Patrick Pierce who married just before mounting the gallows. Bapu observed : 'All honour to the woman of his choice. I should like to know what she is doing at present. You should have asked some one in England about it.'

JULY 30, 1932

Bapu referred to a verse quoted by Nadkarni :

*वृक्षान् छित्त्वा पशून् हत्वा कृत्वा रुधिरकर्दमम् ।
यद्येवं गम्यते स्वर्गं नरकं केन गम्यते ॥

The Sardar remarked, 'Muslims at any rate seem to believe in that pathway to paradise.'

The conversation then turned to Swami Shraddhanand, and the booksellers Rajpal and Bholanath, all murdered by Muslims. Bholanath, poor fellow, was quite innocent ; his only idea was service through including the life of the Prophet in his book. The picture of Gabriel in it was only copied from some ancient painting. Bapu then described his own experience in South Africa.

He read Washington Irving's life of the Prophet and began to publish a simple translation of it in *Indian Opinion* for the benefit of its Muslim readers. Hardly a chapter or two had appeared when the Muslims entered an emphatic protest against the publication. The offending chapters only dealt with the idol-worship, superstition and evil customs prevalent in Arabia before the Prophet was born. Even this was too much for them. Bapu tried to explain that this was only prefatory and intended to show the gigantic evils which the Prophet was born to combat and vanquish, but no one would listen. 'We do not want any such life of the Prophet,' said the Muslims. The later chapters had been written and set in type but had to be cancelled. Bapu then added : 'Poor Bholanath removed the picture and made the necessary corrections in his book. Still he could not save himself. I had intended to

*'If one can go to heaven by cutting trees, killing animals and making blood to flow, how pray can he go to hell ?' *Ed.*

translate Amir Ali's *Spirit of Islam* into Gujarati, but then gave up the idea.'

JULY 31, 1932

Nadkarni in a letter to Bapu dealing with 'Ramarajya' (Rama-rule) refers to Rama's questionable acts, such as the killing of Vali and Shambuka, and the banishment of Sita, which, as he thinks, are responsible for the Hindus' ill-treatment of women, Shudras and Harijans.

I asked Bapu if he would reply to the letter. He said, 'Yes. I intend to write a little.' I suggested he should dictate the reply to me with a view to publication after we were released. 'No,' said Bapu. 'That is simply impossible for me. I say that I do not write what I write, but it is God that makes me write it. This is literally true. As I have a second look at my articles in *Young India*, I feel that I could not write them again. The atmosphere is essential to everything. I will therefore send Nadkarni a brief reply.'

I said, 'What you say is more or less true for many other people. They cannot write today anything like what they wrote yesterday. You spoke in Lausanne for half an hour on the proposition, "Truth is God." You cannot repeat that speech now but you can certainly clothe the same ideas in new words.'

Bapu's reply to Nadkarni is contained in a note he wrote to a little girl today: 'Everything written in books must not be considered authentic. Anything that is immoral or inhuman must not be believed in, no matter in what sacred book it occurs. So long as we have not developed the power to discriminate between the true and the false, we must be guided by the views of trustworthy elders.'

To Bhagvanji Bapu wrote: 'There is a verse in the Isha Upanishad, which means; "Ponder over the work before thee." So doing we shall certainly realize God. He is everywhere, and therefore in my work as well. My work is really His. He who works for the Lord is bound to see Him in course of time.' [क्रतं स्मर । १७ ।]

Answering the question whether women should or should not defend their honour with arms, Bapu wrote :

" A woman whose heart is pure must have faith that God is bound to protect her. It is not right to depend upon arms for those very arms may be used against the woman herself. One who keeps the law of love will have nothing to do with arms ; her non-violence, her love — these are her weapons."

From another letter on the same subject :

'No external weapon is needed for the protection of women or men. For one thing the weapon very often only arms the enemy. Then again one who abides by the law of love will defend her or himself by only dying and not by killing. Women should like Draupadi cultivate the faith that their virtue, that is God, will ensure their defence. God lives in our hearts in the shape of virtue and protects us.'

A girl asked whether it would not be violence to tell an unpleasant truth. To her Bapu replied : 'It is not *himsa* if a person's feelings are hurt by our telling the truth, as we never intended to hurt him. I may ask you for cow's milk, but you refuse to give it to me as I am under a vow not to take it ; if this gives me offence, you are not guilty of violence but have only done your duty.'

To X who wrote that he had a sense of being lonely and good-for-nothing Bapu replied :

" You are suffering from a subtle pride and diffidence at the same time. How can you feel lonely in the midst of so many human beings everyone of whom demands your service and in whose midst you have thrown in your lot ? You are in the midst of books and you will not touch them. You are in the midst of Hindi-speaking men and women and you will not speak to them. You are in the midst of workers and you will not throw yourself into the work and make two blades of grass grow where only one was growing yesterday, make two yards of cloth where only one was woven yesterday. All our philosophy is dry as dust if it is not immediately translated into some act of loving service. Forget the little self in the midst of the greater

you have put yourself in. You must shake yourself free from this lethargy."

To X who wrote she had no mind to go to the Ashram in the absence of Bapu who had drawn her to himself as a magnet, he replied :

'What a reason for not going to the Ashram! What would happen if every one followed your example? Have you not heard the story of the *Kazi* (Muslim judge) and his dog? The dog died, and its corpse was taken for burial in procession, which was joined by the whole town. But when the *Kazi* was dead himself, there were hardly enough mourners to carry his coffin to the cemetery. Are you not guilty of the same negligence as the flatterers of the *Kazi*? Or as the Gujarati *bhajan* puts it,

देहीनां स्नेही सकळ स्वारथियां अंते अळगां रहेशे रे ।

"Man's friends are all selfish; they will all desert him in the end." When a man dies, we burn his corpse. But you — I leave the sentence for you to complete. My point is that we must not make an individual the object of our affection which should be reserved only for his virtues. Every person's virtues result in some concrete act or other. If we admire his virtues, we should promote the activities which constitute their outward expression. You must therefore go to the Ashram and take care of the girls whose acquaintance you have made. And sometimes join the prayers too.'

To Y on the same subject :

'We must worship heroism, not heroes. The hero may later on disgrace himself and in any case must cease to exist, but heroism is everlasting.

'If you do not like most of the men in charge of the Ashram, here is a golden opportunity to learn toleration. None of us is free from faults. Therefore if we decide to look upon others as our equals, the question of liking or disliking them does not arise.

'If the principles of the Ashram are acceptable to you, never mind if opinions differ as regards its external forms. We should be concerned with only the principles, and not with outward forms.

'You should stay in the Ashram if only to remedy the defects in your temperament.

'If you cannot attain your ideal in the Ashram, the fault is yours; for there you have the fullest liberty.

'Why should the love of your friends succeed in making you leave the Ashram? Their love should on the other hand make them visit the Ashram when necessary. Love does not need physical proximity; and if it does, it is only momentary. Separation by death is the test of real love. But this argument can appeal only to the intellect. You will stay where your heart is. If the Ashram fails to hold you, what can you or I do?'

Bapu wrote to this sister that we should not criticize ministers. 'Judge not, lest you be judged.' She replied she did not care if she was judged; every one had the right to criticize the conduct of public men. To her Bapu wrote:

'I am afraid you do not understand the meaning of the admonition: Judge not lest you be judged. Its latter part asks us to beware of falling into the same error ourselves. We must not be haughty in dealing with the world. "Let the world say or do what it likes" is a thought which we must not permit to enter our minds. We are humble before the world. Even when we are sure we are on the right path, we do not punish the world or sit in judgment over it. On the other hand we suffer the world's punishment and bow to its judgment. This is humility or *ahimsa*. I wish your anger did not lead you to write such things. I do not mind if you are angry with me, for I can laugh it out. But your language gives me pain. Indeed you should not even think like that. When the thought entered your mind, you put it down in writing to me. It was good that you did so, for then I can supply the corrective. This criticism should not make you hide your thoughts from me. I would like to see you as you are, whether mad and haughty or humble. What I ask of you is that you should not even think such thoughts.

'Some of the writings of Malthus have not been properly understood; others are full of error. The law which governs the conduct of other animals does not apply to

man. The animals subsist by killing and devouring other animals; man on the other hand tries to avoid such violence. His ideal is non-violence. He will be unable to achieve it in perfection so long as his soul is imprisoned in the body, but if he keeps it constantly in view, he will manage with the minimum of violence. Humanity consists in letting others live even at the cost of one's own life. As the human population increases, so does food also. There has been further scientific research since Darwin.

'"Greatest good of the greatest number" and "might is right" are both false principles. *Ahimsa* wishes good to all. With God it is the good of all that counts. How to bring this about is the subject of our quest; it is not for us to nullify divine law.'

AUGUST 1, 1932

Read in *The Times of India* the news that the rent on my land had been paid to Government: '"Magan Bapu", Mahadev's cousin, gave an insolent answer to the Assistant Collector and refused to pay. The Sub-inspector of Police then visited his house, searched it, unearthed Congress bulletins and prosecuted him. He then offered an apology and paid up.' I do not know how far this is true but the rent has certainly been paid up. I was deeply pained, but what can I do? I did what I could so long as I was a free man, but I cannot counteract the enemy's moves from jail.

AUGUST 2, 1932

The sun put in its appearance this morning. Bapu therefore suggested that the bedsheets should be given an airing. As he made this suggestion he remembered the Scottish wife of Dr Nanji of Durban who was very good at laundering. She would not wash or soap the clothes every day but gave them a good airing. And she explained to Bapu the advantages of the practice.

Ba had undergone at Dr Nanji's hospital an operation which was performed without giving her chloroform, as she had a weak heart. This was a real feat of endurance

on her part. Bapu himself was shaking in his shoes, but Ba's face wore the same unruffled expression throughout.

In the evening Bapu asked on what day X was to complete his sixtieth year.

The Sardar: Why this question? Do you intend to congratulate him?

Bapu: Yes. Why not write to him as we write to others?

The Sardar: It would be a different thing if some one asked you to write. Where is the necessity for writing from jail?

Bapu: Why not? He ranks very high among the writers of his province.

The Sardar: May be.

Bapu: Why 'may be'? There is no doubt about it.

The Sardar: Why should you make much of such a timid man? To think that he is sitting at home and writing articles while the country is all ablaze!

Bapu: Would you go so far as to say that he does not serve the country by his writings?

The Sardar: The writings of learned men are of no use whatever. They turn people into reading-and-writing addicts and thus do a positive disservice. What is such learning worth as only emasculates the people?

Bapu: Would you say this as regards X's writings? I have not read his life of Y, but do you think it would emasculate its readers?

The Sardar: Will people take a lesson from his own life or from his biography of another man?

Bapu: What is wrong with his own life? Do you know that in 1916 Lord Willingdon called a meeting in the Town Hall of Bombay and invited the audience to help Government's war effort? Tilak's party decided to move an amendment to the effect that help could be given only on certain conditions or else to walk out. X stood up on behalf of the party. The audience tried to hiss him out but he stood his ground and had his say after which they left the meeting.

The Sardar: I should agree that they are clever at such theatricals.

Bapu: What then would you like them to do?

The Sardar: They must make some sacrifice.

Bapu: Is going to jail the only method of making sacrifices?

The Sardar: I will not say so. But you don't know them as I do. They believe in the minimum of sacrifice and maximum of gain.

Bapu: Yes. That is his philosophy of life.

The Sardar: A curse on such philosophy! Minimum of sacrifice on their own part, regardless of what the people suffer, and the maximum of gain for themselves.

Bapu: Remember that I will report all this talk to him.

The Sardar: I have said all this to his face. There was a meeting in. . . .where they said X was going to retire from politics. I said he had no right to retire. A man who takes up public life should never think of retiring.

Bapu: But that is not his fault. He would be working even now. But to his misfortune I came in and their occupation was gone. If he has no faith in my methods, is there any wonder if he retires?

The Sardar: All right. Write to him a congratulatory letter by all means, as your motto is,* सत्यं ब्रूयात् प्रियं ब्रूयात् ।

Bapu (turning to me): Mahadev, has this sentence occurred in his text-book of Sanskrit?

I: Yes, Bapu. And tomorrow we are going to begin to read the Gita together. When he has read the Gita, he will interpret it in an original manner and make you repent your decision to let him read it.

As we were going to bed I asked the Sardar if we should commence the Gita the next day. He flung a quotation at me as answer: अदौ वा यदि वा पश्चात् तवेदं कर्म मारिष । As I was criticizing the Superintendent the other day, he remarked:

* 'Tell the truth but tell it in a pleasant manner.' *Ed.*

नैतत्त्वय्युपपद्यते। Instead of 'Thank you' he often says कृतार्थोऽहम् ।

AUGUST 3, 1932

It was by mere accident that we came to know that Government had sent its reply to Bapu's letter as regards our post. Bapu asked the Superintendent about the letters we had posted. 'You need not now worry about your letters,' he replied.

'Have they been sent ?'

'Yes.'

'Are you permitted to send them ?'

'Yes.'

'Since when ?'

'Orders were received on Saturday ; the Ashram post too has therefore been sent. The orders seem to have been issued on account of my representation.'

'But you forget that I wrote to Government about it a few days ago. Instead of replying to me they have issued these orders.'

His wound having become septic, Dr Pranjivan Mehta's leg had to be amputated, but his condition is satisfactory. Bapu sent a wire saying he was glad to hear it and that he would like to receive news about his health every day by wire. A second telegram informed us that he had high fever, and a third that he had pneumonia and his condition was serious. Still Bapu said, 'Even so Doctor may survive the illness if Ratilal and Magan are lucky.'

The bread today was bad ; I therefore prepared *bhakharis* (wheat cakes) for today as well as tomorrow. I forgot to bring away the spare *bhakharis* which were all consumed by the cooks. Bapu said this was negligence on my part. 'You are a poet,' he said. 'Your heart perhaps was somewhere else.' I replied I did not mind if the convicts had eaten our *bhakharis*, but to be charged with negligence gave me pain. Was it not the cook's duty to come and ask me what was to be done with the *bhakharis* that had been left over ?

AUGUST 4, 1932

Received a wire that Dr Mehta had passed on to higher service. He died at 9:45 last night. Bapu's wire of condolence gives us some idea of his feelings on this occasion :

'God's will be done. Consolation to you and mother. Hope you will fully carry on all noblest traditions left by father for commercial integrity, lavish hospitality and great generosity. Sardar, Mahadev join me in condolences. For me I feel forlorn without lifelong faithful friend. Continue keep me informed of everything. May God bless you all.'

Only two months ago Doctor had requested permission to join the Satyagraha movement, and had hoped to meet Bapu in November.

In a letter to Manilal Revashankar Jagjivan Bapu wrote : 'A fine establishment is perhaps on the point of breaking up. You will all miss Doctor, but I am in a strange predicament. I had no greater friend than he, and he is still living, so far as I am concerned. I am only sorry that being in jail I cannot do anything to keep the establishment intact. But I hope you will do your best and let me know what I may expect of you.'

To Nanalal Mehta : 'Doctor's departure has made my position more awkward than that of any one else. I am deeply pained that my oldest co-worker and friend should pass on and I should be unable to do anything in the emergency. But it is perhaps God's mercy that so wills it. See that Doctor's name and fame remain intact and his children perpetuate his virtues in themselves.'

To Doctor's eldest son Chhaganlal :

'Your conduct henceforth should bear the stamp of your having properly understood the lessons of his departure. His many virtues are your real heritage. Let nothing that you do cause pain to your younger brothers. My helplessness at a time when my lifelong co-worker has gone annoys me. Otherwise I would have come and stood beside you. Perhaps Doctor would have drawn his last breath

with his head resting on my lap. But man proposes and God disposes. Therefore I must do what I can only by post.'

To Polak : 'Dr Mehta no more. I have lost a lifelong faithful friend. But for me he lives more intensely by his death than before, for I treasure his many virtues now more than ever. That treasure becomes a sacred trust. Here is a letter for Maganlal. I expect you to do all you can to make him a worthy son of his father. I have advised him not to worry but continue his studies. Broken down though Dr Mehta had become of late, I expect he had preserved his original circumspection to make suitable financial arrangements for Maganlal's studies. Maganlal will know. I feel that I am not by his people's side at the present moment. But not my will, let His be done, now and for ever.'

Received a letter from home detailing the circumstances in which my land rent was paid. It relieved my anxiety though it pained and angered me. Everything at Maganbhai's place including the cow, the buffalo, spades and hoes was confiscated. Cupboards with books were taken away from my house. Ichchha and Maganbhai were detained at the Government guest-house the whole day and had abuse hurled at them. Some one could not bear to see all this and paid up the rent. Ichchha is very much vexed and no wonder, for she has had no such previous experience. I was glad that we could thus share the harassment to which people were being subjected.

Bapu asked if Kothawala was inferior to Jahangir in oppressing the people. 'No,' I replied. 'He leaves Jahangir far behind. Jahangir is ignorant and foolish while this man may be said to be educated.'

As we were going to bed, Bapu said, 'Knowledge must be deepened ; otherwise mere appeals to reason are of no avail. We knew that Doctor was not to live, and his body was fit to break up ; but now that that expected event has come to pass, why should we be so uncomfortable ? ' I said, 'When we receive such news, is it unnatural if we continue to think of dear ones with whom we have passed years and years in close intimacy ? ' Bapu replied, 'We may

certainly think of them but why should we be pained? Why should our feeling not be the same in the case of death as in that of marriage? We are delighted when we remember a marriage; why are we not equally delighted when we remember the dead? My uneasiness is greater at present than when Maganlal Gandhi died, the reason being that if I were out, I would guide Doctor's family aright. But such distress is uncalled for. It may be that my helplessness on this occasion is just the thing.'

Bapu reminisced about Doctor's virtues and paid him the tribute of affection.

AUGUST 5, 1932

Esther Menon who has been lecturing about India and creating a good impression asked Bapu why the idea of brotherhood did not take root among nations in spite of the example set by Bapu, Kagawa, Albert Schweitzer and others. To her Bapu replied:

" Brotherhood is just now only a distant aspiration. To me it is a test of true spirituality. All our prayers, fasting and observances are empty nothings so long as we do not feel a live kinship with all life. But we have not even arrived at that intellectual belief, let alone a heart realization. We are still selective. A selective brotherhood is a selfish partnership. Brotherhood requires no consideration or response. If it did, we could not love those whom we consider as vile men and women. In the midst of strife and jealousy, it is a most difficult performance. And yet true religion demands nothing less from us. Therefore each one of us has to endeavour to realize this truth for ourselves irrespective of what others do."

Bapu saw Jamnadas, Brelvi, Ramdas and Hargovind. He could not see more than three men; therefore Ramdas asked Hargovind to go and wrote a note to Bapu on a slate. Bapu said to the Superintendent: 'Ramdas will be very much disappointed. If you cannot let him talk with me, why not let him see me? Let him stand downstairs and see me as I go, so that you will not be guilty of a breach of rules.' Ramdas was thus called in. He saluted Bapu and

began to walk away. This melted the Superintendent's heart and he said, 'Ramdas need not go. Let him sit down.' I am sure that this was the result of Ramdas' self-denial.

Hargovind asked Bapu what he should do after release from prison. Bapu replied he could not give him any advice, even if he had any idea of conditions outside, which he had not. Hargovind said Bapu had advised that no Satyagraha should be offered against Indian states. But Bapu said that was not an eternal principle. The only two such principles were truth and non-violence (*ahimsa*). He would even go further and say that the only eternal principle was truth. For although truth and non-violence were one and the same thing, if circumstances arose in which he had to choose between the two he would not hesitate to throw non-violence to the winds and to abide by truth, which was supreme in his opinion.

Jamnadas and Brelvi had been so coached by the jail staff that they had not the courage to say anything to Bapu, who therefore asked them: 'Don't you have anything to complain about? Were you better off in Nasik prison or here?' At last the Superintendent himself said: 'They do not like to be locked up in their cells at 2 p.m. on Sundays. But my difficulty is that if the cells were closed later the staff would have to stay in jail till a late hour on that day.' Bapu said that was no defence at all. Was the staff there for prisoners or were the prisoners there for the staff? This question shocked the Superintendent who said, 'How can we say that the staff is there for the prisoners? It has to keep the prisoners in safe custody, has it not?' Bapu replied, 'So the staff is there to punish the prisoners! As a matter of fact it is there to serve them, to maintain them in health and to give them all the facilities which are permissible under the rules.'

Some good letters were received today. One of them was from Miss Turton of the Siena Ashram in Italy with three flowers grown in that settlement. It was written on Friday in order to assure us that they would be thinking of us at half past seven today. And it was received also on

Friday. Another was from eighty-five-year-old Babu Har Dayal Nag :

"I am very glad to learn from your letter to Krishnadas that you, Sardarji and Desaiji are all in good health. I was quite well in jail and am all right now. In jail I spent the days in spinning and reading. I learnt *takli* (spindle) spinning there. God's favours were profusely showered on me. I gained there both spiritually and physically. My spiritual gain could not be measured but my physical gain was found to be 16 pounds in weight. Please convey my compliments and my best regards to Sardarji and Desaiji."

To him Bapu replied as follows :

" Dear Har Dayal Babu,

" It was a perfect delight to all of us to hear from you. You make me jealous when you say that at your ripe age you learnt *takli* spinning. It was a great joy to learn that you had gained 16 pounds in weight. May you have many more years of service. We often talk about you and your wonderful vitality. With regards from us all."

AUGUST 6, 1932

Two political prisoners from Karnatak have been fasting for the last 20 days. After 15 days they were forcibly fed milk by the jail authorities. They fasted on the ground that in *chaturmas* ((four months of the rainy season) they were not allowed to take food cooked by Brahmans only. We considered this demand unreasonable and said nothing. Today Bapu discussed the subject with the Superintendent. He asked if some one would be permitted to see the prisoners and make them see the error of their ways. The Superintendent objected that all jail discipline would be destroyed if such permission was granted. Prisoners would fast and other prisoners would have to be sent to induce them to break fast, and there would be no end to such incidents. Bapu said he was not suggesting that the fasters should be given what they wanted but only that some one should be allowed to see them to explain things. The Superintendent should look

at the situation as a man and not as an officer. As an officer he might insist that the prisoners should yield to him. But as a man he should feel that these men need not be emasculated. The Superintendent replied, 'No, no. If I let others see them, prisoners would fast in order to compel me to let them see their friends. And these prisoners do not seem to be fasting at all. They must be secretly taking food.' 'In that case,' said Bapu, 'I would say that you are dehumanizing them still more. Do you wish that they should continue like this ?' The Superintendent then said, 'I cannot hold my own against you in argument. You may see them if you like.'

Bapu met the fasting prisoners in the afternoon. He came to know that they were asking for food cooked by Brahmans in terms of the Jail Manual rules, according to which no prisoner may be compelled to give up the custom of his caste, and Brahmans must be given food cooked by Brahmans or allowed to cook their own meals. Munshi told them in Bijapur about this prisoner's right. One of the two fasting Satyagrahis is in jail for the fourth time. He took food cooked by non-Brahmans before, but when his brother died, he promised that he would observe all caste rules and take food cooked by Brahmans only. The other prisoner has taken food cooked by non-Brahmans even during his present jail term, but has now joined the first in fasting. They asked why they should forfeit their rights as prisoners simply because they had joined the national movement. Bapu explained to them how this position was untenable. After coming to jail they must not quarrel about such matters. But when the prisoners referred to their rights under rules framed by Government, Bapu said, 'Well, then, I will not compel you to break your fast, on the condition that you prove to my satisfaction that there is such a rule. But if there is no such rule, you must obey me. You obey either the jail rules or the rules which are binding on a Satyagrahi.' The prisoners at last promised that they would break the fast if it was shown to Bapu that there was no such rule in jail and that the Superintendent had no right to give a prisoner food cooked by Brahmans.

Bapu asked to see the Jail Manual. But Dr Mehta said there were orders that it could not be given to any prisoner. Bapu said in that case he would have to fight it out with Government.

In the evening Bhandari came to see Bapu. This was a remarkable meeting. The Superintendent seemed to be dejected and perhaps also angry. 'These prisoners,' he said, 'have taken food cooked by non-Brahmans before. Why can't they take it now ? It is not a clean fight on their part.' Bapu said, 'If they propose to live as Brahmans today, and if you can give them the facility according to the rules, it is your duty to oblige them.' 'No,' replied the Superintendent. 'I have no such right. I would have to obtain the sanction of the Inspector-General of Prisons.' 'But these prisoners hold,' said Bapu, 'that you have the right according to the rules.' The Sardar intervened and said, 'I think he has that right. I have seen prisoners served food cooked by Brahmans.'

Then they came to the question whether a prisoner could ask to see the Jail Manual. The Superintendent said he could not. Bapu suggested that that officer should ask Doyle if the Jail Manual could be shown to him (Bapu). The Superintendent said, 'Supposing I show you the Manual, and then you think I have the right and I think that I have not, what is to be done ? ' 'Then ask Doyle,' suggested Bapu. 'In that case, he would come to know that I had shown you the Manual,' said the Superintendent. 'You need not tell him that,' suggested Bapu. 'Ask him straightaway. I will drop the idea of fighting in order to get the Manual in this connection.' The Superintendent said he would have a look at the rules the next day and then show them to Bapu. I said, 'Why tomorrow ? You please get the Manual here and now, so that there is a quick decision.' Bapu promised that if he at all felt that the rule could bear the interpretation put upon it by the Superintendent, he would accept it. But if he formed the opinion that there was no room for two interpretations and his own interpretation was the right one, he would ask the Superintendent to write to the Inspector-General. The

Superintendent agreed to this. The Jail Manual was called for. The relevant rule was like this: 'It is forbidden to hurt any one's religious feelings. If a Brahman insists on taking food cooked by Brahmans, such an arrangement can be made for him. But his object in making this demand should not be that of merely harassing the jail staff. If there is no Brahman cook among the prisoners, the man should be free to cook for himself. But if there is any question arising out of caste matters, the Superintendent should refer it to the Inspector-General whose orders shall be final.' Bapu read it and at once said to the Superintendent, 'You are right.' That officer's joy knew no bounds. He saw that he could obtain the purest justice from Gandhiji. The fasting prisoners were called to our ward. Bapu explained everything to them, and they came round at once. This incident helped to make the relations between Bapu and the Superintendent sweeter and fuller of mutual understanding than before.

AUGUST 7, 1932

Bapu finished the Ashram post today. To Prabhudas he wrote: 'Adhere to the practice of *nama-japa* (repetition of the Name) by all means. It will be helpful when everything else has failed.'

To Premabehn: 'The inner voice defies description. But sometimes we do feel that we receive an inspiration from within. The time when I learnt to recognize it may be called my prayer time, say about 1906. I recollect it and tell you as you ask me. For the rest never did I feel at any time in my life that I had some new experience. My spiritual growth has been unnoticed like the growth of hair on our heads.

'*Nama-japa* helps one to conquer sin. One who repeats the Name with a pure heart is full of faith that the repetition is bound to help him in this conquest. To conquer sin in other words means self-purification. One who repeats the Name in faith will never tire of it, so that the Name which is at first on the tongue enters the heart and purifies it. This is the universal experience without

any exceptions. Even psychologists hold that as a man thinks, so he becomes. This principle applies to Rama-nama. I have the fullest faith in *Nama-japa*. Its discoverer was a man of experience, and I am firmly of opinion that his discovery is extremely important. Purification should be possible even for the illiterate. And here *Nama-japa* comes in (Gita, IX, 22 ; X, 10). Telling the beads of a rosary is a help in achieving mental concentration.

'Learning should be acquired only with a view to service. But service is full of inexhaustible joy. Therefore we may say that learning is an aid to blessedness. Mere learning without service has never been known to lead to eternal bliss.'

To some one who asked, 'The world has always been as it is ; when will it improve ?' Bapu replied : 'Instead of thinking of improving the world, let us concentrate our attention on self-improvement. We can scarcely find out if the world is on the right or the wrong path. But if we take the strait and narrow path, we shall find all taking it too or discover the method of inducing them to take it. To know oneself is to forget the body or to reduce oneself to zero.'

To A : 'You did well to go and see X's dead body. We too shall be reduced to that condition some day. Let us hope that when it comes, we shall be glad to depart this life. So long as we wear this vesture of clay, let us keep it clean, pure and healthy, and when we have to cast it off, let us discard it without any regret. It was given to us for use. Let the Giver take it away when He pleases. We have to use it for service only, and not for enjoyment.'

To L : 'I cannot share your sorrow, as your wife has only been released from pain. She died at such a time and in such a manner as might make us envy her. Why do you ignorantly think that you have now nobody to look after you ? Is not the Lord the shepherd of us all ? Neither Mani nor your wife was your shield. The real shield is our faith in God. The human body is less durable even than a glass bangle, which, if well preserved, may continue to exist for hundreds of years. But our bodies, no matter

how carefully preserved, cannot last beyond a certain period, and may be destroyed at any time during that period. We may not put our trust in them. You should be engrossed in Ashram work, leaving aside all other plans. Mangala is 6 years old and therefore you yourself should look after her, as well as teach Shanti and Jekur to do so. You are perhaps not aware that Maganlal brought up Rukhi from her very childhood although her mother Santok was living. Her life was despaired of. She could breathe only with difficulty. Maganlal gave her a bath, dressed her hair and fed her and at the same time looked after his other children. And yet he put in more work than all the rest of us. His garden was the best in Phoenix. He grew the first rose in Phoenix. The earth seemed to shake when he tried to turn over some of the hard soil in the Ashram. You are capable of doing everything that Maganlal did. I have thus far not even mentioned Maganlal's literary or artistic gifts. He had self-confidence and faith in his work. God had endowed him with a powerful physique. This physique weakened under the stress of Ashram work and Maganlal's own austerities (*tapas*). But I believe that during his short span of life he did as much work as could be done in a century or centuries. I have cited Maganlal's case, as you know him and your connection with the Ashram was due to his affection for you. Remember Maganlal and forget that you have been crippled or plunged into darkness. The facilities within your reach are not available even to one out of a hundred thousand of our people.'

To R: 'All useful work ranks the same with us and may be done by us. Tanning, carpentry, cleaning lavatories, agriculture, weaving, cooking, cow-keeping and such other work are all of equal value, and if I could bring the people round to my view, the literate and the illiterate, the teacher and the scavenger would be paid the same remuneration for their work. You are perhaps aware that with a view to research in this field, only the hours of work put in by Ashramites are placed on record. Therefore if at present you get insufficient yarn, you

should not imagine that your status is lowered by taking to agriculture and the like.'

To X : 'You should first find out what is your mental attitude to your wife. If you have made a firm resolution not to cohabit with her, you should inform her and friends about it. It will be a shock for her, but your firmness will strike her like lightning. It is implicit in firmness that you will not mind even if your wife goes mad or dies. You should be fully aware that this step is in the best interest of both of you. But if you are not ready to go so far as that, you must cease to quarrel with your wife, live with her like all our ordinary married men and so doing, observe what restraint is possible in the circumstances. This course of conduct need not entail any censure from the world, as each of us can march forward only according to his own capacity. To remain in suspense, to deceive oneself, one's people and the world is certainly open to serious objection. You steer clear of it, and all will be well. Get out of the welter of conflicting ideas, by which you have been swayed hither and thither for years. Come to a quiet decision which will conduce to peace of mind. This is the Gita teaching in* व्यवसायात्मिका बुद्धिरेकेह कुरुनन्दन । २-४१ । Read carefully this and the succeeding verses so that more light will be shed on the subject-matter of this letter.'

To some one who asked what he expected of members of the Gandhi family Bapu replied :

'I expect that all of them should devote their lives to service, practise self-control as far as possible, give up the desire of amassing riches, give up also the idea of contracting a marriage, observe *brahmacharya* if they are already married, and obtain their living through service. The field of service is so extensive that it can absorb any number of men and women. Is there anything more to add ? '

AUGUST 8, 1932

Horniman is now spreading false rumours. Bapu remarked that this was another facet of his personality.

* 'In this the resolute understanding is single' (Radhakrishnan's translation). *Ed.*

The Free Press Journal says that there is correspondence between Gandhi and the Viceroy. The Associated Press of India says this is a fabrication and the *Bombay Chronicle* prints its declaration in bold type, as if it were itself not guilty of fabrication. There is a three-column article in the *Chronicle* in which it is stated that it has heard the news from reliable sources that we need not wonder if Gandhiji is released! It then refers to and quotes from letters received as regards the correspondence with Hoare and passes comments on them!

AUGUST 9, 1932

Bapu referring to my study of French said I was very ambitious. But he himself is collecting a veritable library of books on Urdu, currency and astronomy. Only today he wrote to Akbar Hydari, asking him to send selected publications of Osmania University. He is making a deep study of Isha Upanishad, and therefore reading various commentaries of it.

AUGUST 10, 1932

Mahabharat ethics based on a profound study of psychology stands in a class by itself. There are many definitions and descriptions of truth, but this Adiparva verse defines it and castigates untruth in a unique manner:

योऽन्यथा सन्तमात्मानमन्यथा प्रतिपद्यते ।
किं तेन न कृतं पापं चौरेणात्मापहारिणा ॥

'There is no thief so dangerous as the hypocrite (man of false conduct), for his is the sin of the deepest dye.'

AUGUST 11, 1932

Today's letters were all from prisoners. One of these was from Ramdas who complained that Bapu who was very strict at a time in doing and imposing penance had now become too lenient and people took an undue advantage of this leniency. He seems to have taken a vow not to take cinnamon and cloves since the unfortunate

incident recorded by me under July 21, with the result that his wife Nirmala has given up milk and *ghi*. To him Bapu replied as follows :

'I understand that you have not still resolved to give up cinnamon and cloves. I am thinking of writing to Nimu. If she has actually taken a vow, I will not insist on her breaking it. I will only explain to her what her duty is. I believe one must not try to make others reverse decisions of this kind ; for if he does, the latter will tend to become weak of will. I do not repent of my previous severity. It was justified at the time. But now the least little severity on my part seems as grave as the Himalayas. Formerly I had to fast for objectives which I can now achieve by mere rebuke, and others also came in for their share.

'If I acted now in the same way as I did before, it would be sheer cruelty on my part. That is not to say that others have marched abreast of me. But those who come in contact with me are under my influence and drastic action is uncalled for. Therefore so long as I, the great sentinel, am there, you or Nimu need not draw suffering on yourselves independently of me. You shall have to walk warily when I am no longer here to cover you. Such being the facts of the situation, things tend to slow down in my absence. That is how this world functions. The lesson therefore which we must learn is that we must be wide awake. It is well that you now depend on me as a creeper on a tree. But you should get out of this dependence and stand on your own legs. I have already mentioned the reason why Nimu's reaction was so prompt and immediate. But circumstances were quite different at the time of my life which you remember. The surrounding atmosphere there was not so responsive or lofty as it is now. If I write strongly to Nimu, she would merely shrivel up. I hope you now understand what you call my leniency. The same true love is at work at the back of my former severity and present leniency. For the rest you are right that it would be a bad thing if any one misunderstood my leniency and became quite careless in his behaviour. There is such a

possibility but the reason for it is different. I have grown lenient to myself. I am not unbending as I used to be. My body is unable to meet my demands on it. And I naturally hesitate to expect others to do what I myself am not doing. Therefore I have often said in the Ashram that I am no longer fit to be in charge of it.

'The gate-keeper of the Ashram should be strong and vigilant. Formerly I worked shoulder to shoulder with all the rest, so that they had to stand by my side. Now they must attend not to what I do but to what I say. It is therefore natural if you notice some slackness all around.

'Your vigilance is pleasing to me. But in the present case you must not treat Nimu with severity. There is a distinct change in my views as regards the relation between husband and wife and I do wish that you may not treat your wife as I treated Ba. Ba lost nothing on account of my severity, as I never considered her my property. I had love and respect for her. I wanted her to surmount her weaknesses. Still Ba could not rebuke me as I rebuked her. I did not give Ba equal rights in practice, and poor Ba had not the power to claim them in common with most other Hindu women. This is a defect in Hindu society. I therefore wish that you let Nimu be as independent as you are. I once wrote to her in fun that she should not regard herself as dependent and worry you in petty matters. She replied you knew that she was dependent. This language is mine but the sentiment is hers. This dependence must become a thing of the past. If Nimu needs a servant, why should she ask you about it? She would tell Narandas that she needed help and even fight if necessary. This is only a trivial illustration. The point is that she should be free to act as she pleases in household affairs. If you wish to misbehave with another woman, you will not be afraid of Nimu. It may be that her love would act as a check on you. The same principle applies to Nimu. Mutual love should be the basis of conjugal fidelity and not fear. I learnt to educate people accordingly only at the Ashram. My treatment of Ba at Sabarmati underwent all these phases, so that she has made great progress. She is no longer

subject to fear as before. If I am angry with her, I transfer the anger to myself. Infatuation is at the root of such anger. The change that has come over me is an important one and has yielded splendid results. They will be still more splendid as my love grows purer. Innumerable women naturally confide in me, because of my love and respect for them. These feelings of mine work in an invisible manner.'

Another letter is from Brelvi, which betrays his purity of heart, patriotism, and feeling for Lallubhai's family. He says his friendship with Vaikunth Mehta has been his great good fortune in life. His letter shows how much a Hindu family can achieve by a catholic outlook on life.

August 12, 1932

When the Superintendent comes to us, he is always in the habit of saying, 'What's the news?' In answer to this usual question Bapu said today: 'It is you who receive all news and not we. You laid a trap for me, and I would have been in a sorry plight if I had stumbled into it. Ansari wrote to you on the 20th, but you told me nothing about it and asked if I would see him if he came. If I replied that I would not see him, you would write to Government to that effect. Government then would inform Ansari that I did not see anybody. Fortunately for me I did not give you a careless answer; otherwise you would have caught me in a trap.' The Superintendent replied: 'No, no. Such was never my intention. Ansari is a friend of mine. I would have written to him that he need not write to Government as Gandhiji did not see anybody. For why should he take a refusal for nothing?' But Bapu remarked that there was some purpose even in taking a refusal. When the letter was received, the Superintendent should have discussed it with him and arrived at a decision. As it was he had sent the letter to Government, and afterwards come to Bapu to ask him. Even then he did not reveal that he was asking as the letter had been received. The Superintendent said he would have written not to Government but to Ansari. 'You should have written to

Ansari in the first instance,' said Bapu. 'You should not blow hot and cold with the same breath. If he is a friend of yours, you should have written to him at first or after asking me about it. If he is not a friend, you should have written to Government and washed your hands of the whole thing. On the other hand you laid a trap, may be unintentionally, but the result would have been just that and nothing else. I must tell you that this is a dangerous practice.' 'I am very sorry,' said the Superintendent. 'I never wished to do any such thing.' So saying he went away with a dejected look.

Letters from the Ashram dealt with the girl's ignorance about menstruation, and the ailments arising from the habit of concealing it. They set Bapu thinking and he wrote long letters on the subject.

Bapu wrote a long letter to Premabehn: 'You cite sage Narada's case, but you do not understand the meaning of what he said. You are free to worship the individual as Narada did, for such worship is worth offering. His Krishna was as historic as the god Vishnu in his Vaikuntha (heaven). Narada's god had his figure installed in the temple of his imagination. That Narada exists at present as well as his Krishna, for both live in our imagination. Indeed I hold the imagination is superior to history. Tulsidas perhaps meant the same thing when he said that *Nama* (the Name) is superior to Rama. You make me anxious because you have been caught in the whirlpool of individual worship. Narandas has relieved me of all anxiety, and so have some others. They all worship an individual, for there is none who does not. But they have transferred their worship from the individual to his virtues and his conduct. We lost sight of this valuable principle and were foolish enough to teach women to mount the funeral pyres of their husbands. That is the high-water mark of the worship of the individual! But as a matter of fact it is a bereaved wife's duty to continue her husband's work in her own person. If sex is excluded from the relation of husband and wife, the ideal is capable of universal application, so that that love ultimately reaches the Great White Throne.

'I had adversaries before, and have them now. However I have never been angry with them. Even in a dream I have never been ill-disposed towards them, with the result that many adversaries have become friends. No opposition to me has been successful to this very day. I am still here, three attacks on my person notwithstanding. That is not to say that the adversary will never succeed in attaining his object. He may or may not succeed, and I have nothing to do with it. My duty consists in wishing him well and serving him on a suitable occasion. I have practised this doctrine to the best of my ability. I believe that it is an integral part of my mental constitution. I am worried when thousands of people revere me. I have never come to believe that I am fit for this reverence which leaves me utterly cold. On the other hand I have been aware of my unfitness. I do not remember that I had at any time a craving for honour. But I have always yearned to work. I have tried to turn those who would honour me into co-workers. When they have resisted this transformation, I have rejected their advances. I would be happy as a bird if I reached my goal, but that is only an aspiration at present.

'One need not cultivate haughtiness or incivility in order to stand up against the world. Jesus faced the world and so did Buddha, and Prahlad. But they were all the very picture of humility. The essential requisites are self-confidence and faith in God. Those who opposed the world in their pride have collapsed at last. Your pride and anger are sometimes a mere pretence, but even that pretence is undesirable, as it gives rise to needless misunderstanding. We must walk warily in order to avoid it.

'The power to stand alone till the end cannot be developed without extreme humility. Without this power a man is nothing worth. Many who pass as brave people have never had their bravery put to the test.'

AUGUST 13, 1932

During the morning walk Bapu said, 'The communal decision may be due to be announced or any other event may

be about to occur, but never before has it interfered with my sleep. But last night my sleep was disturbed by dreams about the decision. I woke up and still the same thought occupied my mind, till at last I was absorbed in looking at the stars and fell asleep. I do not know when the thought ceased to trouble me. The reason for this is obvious. My future course of conduct will be determined by this decision.'

AUGUST 14, 1932

Bapu asked me if I noticed any improvement in the Sardar's Sanskrit pronunciation. 'Certainly,' I said. 'Whenever he mispronounces a word, he knows at once that he has committed a mistake. The fact is he finds these studies very interesting. Sanskrit was till now a closed book for him. But now he is on a voyage of its discovery and feels as if the gates of paradise had opened for him (स्वर्गद्वारमपावृतम्). He is therefore making rapid progress.' Bapu remarked: 'That is the key to learning. Sanskrit is in our blood and in the national atmosphere, and no wonder if the Sardar entertains such feeling for it, but our feeling would be the same as regards the minute study of any other language.' He said this because he is so fond of etymology. But of what is he not fond? In order to discover a cure for the ailment of Ashram girls, he thought of studying physiology and anatomy, and was the other day asking Major Mehta to recommend some medical book dealing with treatment of diseases suitable for even a layman.

A heap of letters was enclosed in the Ashram envelope.

To Chhaganlal Joshi: 'There is liberty as the background of labour in the Ashram as against slavery in labour elsewhere. As a matter of fact there is liberty everywhere. He who invites suffering may not complain about it even to himself. On the other hand suffering should be to him as happiness. In what an ecstasy did Sudhanva dance in the pan of hot oil! How did Prahlad manage to embrace a pillar of red-hot iron? Let us not dismiss them as the heroes of idle myths, for their

experience can be ours today. Latimer and Ridley and Mansur are all historic persons. It all depends upon the mind.'

To X: 'It won't do for any one to say: "I am only what I am." That is a cry of despair. A seeker of truth will say: "I will be what I ought to be." My appeal is for you to come out of your shell and see yourself in every face about you. How can you be lonely in the midst of so much life? All our philosophy is vain, if it does not enable us to rejoice in the company of fellow-beings and their service.'

To Y: 'Do not destroy K's soul. I have respect for her firmness. We may not interfere with the performance of what she thinks is her duty; on the other hand we should encourage her. It is your duty to support her and not to be angry with her. We would not mind if some unknown woman misbehaved herself. We should be equally indifferent, when the miscreant is a relation of ours. Such equimindedness is the key to bliss.'

To a girl who asked what to do when one is angry:

'The proper question to put is: What to do in order that one never gets angry? For this he has to be generous to all and to have a heart grasp of the idea that we are in all beings, and all beings are in us. Every drop in the ocean is different from every other drop and yet they all combine to make the ocean. The same is the case as regards the ocean that is this universe. Where then is the occasion for any one to be angry with someone else?'

To another girl: 'You must not think you are wrong so long as your heart does not say so. After all that is our only standard of judgment. We therefore try to keep our hearts pure. The sinner thinks sin is a meritorious thing, because his heart is impure. In any case he will persist in his error so long as he has not acquired knowledge. Therefore none else can point out what is good for you. I can only say that we have to tread the path of truth and non-violence, and keep the observances to that end.'

'Caste distinctions are not observed in the Ashram, because caste has nothing to do with religion in general and Hinduism in particular. It is a sin to believe that any

one else is inferior or superior to ourselves. We are all equal. It is the touch of sin that pollutes us, and never that of a human being. None are high and none are low for one who would devote his life to service. The distinction between high and low is a blot on Hinduism, which we must obliterate.'

'Duties to self, to the family, to the country and to the world are not independent of one another. One cannot do good to the country by injuring himself or his family. Similarly one cannot serve the country by injuring the world at large. In the final analysis we must die that the family may live, the family must die that the country may live and the country must die that the world may live. But only pure things can be offered in sacrifice. Therefore, self-purification is the first step. When the heart is pure, we at once realize what is our duty at every moment.'

AUGUST 15, 1932

Cocoanut day. Isn't it a great good fortune to receive the protective string (*rakshagranthi*) from pure-hearted sisters in jail ? It is as well that Manibehn Patel has been awarded 15 months' imprisonment. She has also been ordered to leave Ahmedabad and to live in Karamsad her native place.

A letter from Chhaganlal detailing the heart-rending circumstances in which Dr Pranjivan Mehta died. At such advanced age the paralytic and diabetic Doctor walked about his bed-room in search of a book with a table-lamp in his hand. He dropped the lamp on his foot and cut it with a piece of glass. The cut was neglected while the Doctor went about for three days inspecting his fields and attending to other business. The wound became septic, the leg had to be amputated and the Doctor was dead in a week. Chhaganlal writes that after the operation and before his death the Doctor's fingers moved as if he was telling the beads on a rosary. Once again Bapu dwelt on the Doctor's many virtues. No Indian was now left in Burma so representative of India as the Doctor was. So long as he

was there, any Indian from India could go to him and get funds for his institution.

Bapu was indisposed today. For three days he took potatoes which caused constipation, so that he was sick after lunch. But as soon as he had washed his mouth he began to dictate letters again. The Sardar suggested that he should take some rest. 'No, no,' said Bapu. 'The stomach is now light and I am all right.' Raja wrote only today that Bapu's correspondence was as heavy in jail as outside ; only it was of a different kind.

From a letter to fellow prisoners : 'For those who find it difficult to concentrate their mind on their studies, it is a great help to forget the outside world altogether. If a dying man has his heart in the world, he is unhappy himself and the cause of unhappiness in others ; the same is the case with a prisoner in jail who should cease to think of the outside world ; for imprisonment means civil death. One who is civilly dead becomes mad himself and maddens others about him if he pokes his nose into the outside world. This prescription of mine is no new discovery. Bunyan could not have written *The Pilgrim's Progress* and Lokamanya Tilak his commentary on the Gita if in prison they had continued to worry about the outside world.'

Tolstoy writes :

'I speak of a personal God, whom I do not acknowledge for the sake of convenience of expression. There are two Gods. There is the God people generally believe in, a God who has to serve them sometimes in a very refined way ; perhaps merely by giving them peace of mind. This God does not exist. But the God whom we all have to serve does exist and is the prime cause of our existence and of all we perceive.'

Bhuskute in a letter to Bapu asked him which of these two Gods he believed in, for if a man believed in the second God, prayer had no meaning for him. To him Bapu replied :

'I believe in both the Gods, the one who serves us as well the other whom we serve. It is impossible that we should render service and not receive some return for it.

But in fact both these Gods are imaginary. God who really is is beyond the reach of human imagination; He does not serve, nor is He served. No epithet applies to Him, for God is not an external entity but abides in the human heart. And as we do not know how God works, we should remember Him whom our mind cannot reach. The moment we thus remember Him, our own imagination bodies Him forth. In fact theism is not a product of the human intellect but an act of faith. Intellect here is of little use. And directly we believe in God, no further speculation is necessary as regards the ways of the world, for as we believe in God, we likewise believe that no part of His creation is without a purpose.'

Quoting the verse आचारः प्रथमो धर्मः some one asked Bapu what it meant. To him he replied:

'*Achara* means external behaviour which changes from time to time. The internal principles are always the same, such as truth, non-violence and the like. And keeping them always in view, one should modify one's external conduct when necessary. आचारः प्रथमो धर्मः implies that we must not blindly adhere to anything. Every Sanskrit verse has not the status of scripture. Even Manusmriti as we have it now is not a scripture. Scripture is not something written in books but ought to be a living thing. Therefore the words of a man of knowledge and character who practises what he preaches constitute the scripture for us. But if no such man is in sight, what men think is the truth is scripture for them provided that they are men of culture.'

To some one who asked why Bapu did not emphasize *brahmacharya* (chastity) along with prayer, he replied: '*Brahmacharya* and prayer are not things of the same class. *Brahmacharya* is one of the five primary observances while prayer is one of the means of keeping them. I have dwelt often enough on the importance of *brahmacharya*. But as I thought of the means by which it could be achieved, I saw that prayer is a most powerful means to that end. *Brahmacharya* is easy for one who realizes the value of prayer and offers it with a singleness of purpose.'

'The ideal doctor is one who acquires sufficient knowledge of medicine and makes that knowledge available to the public free of charge. He will obtain his livelihood by doing some common work or receiving what little the public give him. But he would never imagine that that was his fee. In an ideal state of things I should fix a yearly allowance for such servants of the people who need not expect anything from their patients, whether rich or poor.'

'*Japayajna* means repeating the Name, so far as I can judge.'

'It is difficult to find how much exactly one should eat, but it is easy to eat a little, that is to say, resolutely to eat less than one needs, and that is the better way.

'One who would keep the observance of truth should not think a single thought which he would hide from the world. He should not mind if the world comes to know even his silly ideas. Members of the Ashram are worried by the fear that some one else might read their diary, because they wish to appear better than they are. But when a man does not care even if the whole world looks into his diary, why should he hide it from his wife ? '

'The only limit to the keeping of the observances is our capacity.

'So long as there is the distinction of *meum* and *teum* between friends and even between husband and wife, each may not take anything belonging to the other without permission. Your intention that you will put it again in its original place does not meet the case, if only because you can never be sure that you will live long enough to carry it out or that the thing will not be stolen while it is still in your charge. In observing this rule, we should not mind if we are accused of pedantry and even worse on that account.'

AUGUST 16, 1932

Bapu wrote today quite a number of letters with a view to deal with the complicated situation created by the death of his dear friend Dr Mehta. The details are not of

interest to the reader, but one principle enunciated by Bapu in these letters may be noted here: 'You are right when you say that you cannot trust those who are not trustworthy. My point was that we should not eye any one else suspiciously. Let us trust others even as we expect them to trust us. And let us not repent of it if later on we find that they were unworthy of trust. One who makes it a point to trust others has never been a loser; on the other hand one who commits a breach of trust in the hope of big gains can only lose. We lose when our heart is corrupted. Money comes and goes. If it goes, let us not shed a tear over it.'

Maganbhai's letter details the circumstances in which the rent on my land was paid to Government. What a painful contrast between my timid fellow-villagers and the brave peasants of Ras in Borsad taluka! We see how Government has converted pensioners into slaves. If we look at it with care, we find that every part of Government machinery is designed to perpetuate the slavery of the people. What a pity that a man who belongs to the same sub-caste of Brahmans as myself should as Mamlatdar (Revenue Officer) abuse Bapu, the Sardar and me!

August 17, 1932

The communal decision was published today. Bapu went about his work till the evening as if nothing had happened. He asked me to prepare a *bajra* cake and ate it with relish. Almond butter was made with the help of the machine. As we were taking the usual evening walk, he read Horniman's article and liked it. In the course of conversation in the morning he said: 'The decision only confirms the minorities' pact. Everything has gone according to the plan in Benthall's letter.'

I said the new constitution was worse than the Montagu-Chelmsford reforms. 'Certainly,' replied Bapu. 'Those reforms were based on the Lucknow agreement between Congress and the Muslim League. But this constitution seeks to create such divisions in the country that it can never again stand up on its own legs.' Just

before the evening prayer he said to me, 'Well, you and the Sardar think over the situation and tell me whatever you feel like saying. The letter to Samuel Hoare details the steps I should take in order to deal with the present situation. I have therefore to serve the British Government with a notice.' I was taken aback and said nothing. The Sardar and I had also a similar feeling. I sang Surdas's hymn अबकी टेक हमारी and began to read the Ashram post.

The letters which had to be written were written at once, and then Bapu began to write the letter to MacDonald.

AUGUST 18, 1932

After finishing it in the morning Bapu said, 'You stop spinning for a while and go through this letter so that it may be sent at once.' The Sardar and I read it. Then he said, 'There is no reference in the letter to other parts of the decision. May not this be misinterpreted to mean that they are approved by you?' 'No,' replied Bapu. 'My views are well-known. Still if you wish, I will insert one paragraph, although I would then have to enter into argument. In this letter I propose to leave out all argument, this having been included in the letter to Samuel Hoare.' I suggested that Bapu should only say his soul rebelled against the decision as a whole, but part of it was so vicious that he would lay down his life in the attempt to get it annulled. 'No', said Bapu. 'No such comparison may fairly be instituted. If it were, they would say that I wanted to get the decision annulled in its entirety and had seized upon a certain part of it as a pretext. I do want the whole decision to go. But at night I thought for a moment over the question whether other points should be included and decided against their inclusion.'

The same subject was discussed in the evening. Bapu observed, 'I cannot put in other things at all, for that would be tantamount to mixing politics with religion. The

two questions are in fact distinct from each other.' He then continued, 'I have rehearsed everything in my own mind. Everything you have suggested was considered by me before I reached the decision. Separate electorates for the Muslims and the rest are fraught with danger. They will combine with the British to suppress the Hindus. But I can think of methods by which the combination can be dealt with. When once the outsider who foments quarrels is gone, we can tackle our problems with success. But as regards the so-called untouchables I have no other remedy. How possibly am I to explain things to these poor fellows? To draw suffering on oneself when misfortune dogs one's footsteps is no novelty. How did Sudhanva fall into the pan full of hot oil and how did Prahlad embrace a pillar of red-hot iron? There will be many Satyagraha movements even after the attainment of Swaraj. I have often had the idea that after the establishment of Swaraj I should go to Calcutta and try to stop animal sacrifice offered in the name of religion. The goats at Kalighat are worse off even than untouchables. They cannot attack men with their horns. They can never throw up an Ambedkar from their midst. My blood boils when I think of such violence. Why do they not offer tigers instead of goats?'

In the morning we discussed the possible repercussions of Bapu's step. I said, 'It will be misinterpreted in a variety of ways. Here in India there will be senseless imitation of it while in America they will say Gandhi obtained his release by his fast.' 'I know,' replied Bapu. 'In America they will swallow anything, and there are British agents ready to help them to do so. Many will even say that I am now a bankrupt, that my spirituality is not paying dividends; therefore, I committed suicide like cunning insolvents. And in this country there will be blind imitation, and misinterpretation. The Government will perhaps release me and let me die outside prison, or perhaps they will let me die in jail, as in the case of MacSwinney. Our own men will be critical. Jawaharlal will not like it at all. He will say we have had enough of such religion. But that does not matter. When I am going

to wield a most powerful weapon in my spiritual armoury, misinterpretation and the like may never act as a check.'

AUGUST 19, 1932

Sapru has expressed his opinion of the decision, which for him has little significance when compared with the constitutional question. He thinks the decision has been made in good faith and is an honest effort. Bapu's comment on this was: 'Sapru and Munje are contradictories. Munje does not care for the constitution if his demands on behalf of the Hindus are granted, while Sapru will not bother with the nature of the communal solution if he gets the constitution.'

But the Sardar is very unhappy about it. He said we could never tell what the liberals would do on a certain occasion. They thought they had a monopoly of wisdom. They testified to the good faith of the British whom no one else in the country was ready to trust. They wanted to regain their self-respect which they had lost. Otherwise they would have no standing in the country. I predicted that the liberals would join the British Government in condemning Bapu's step. The Sardar said that could not be helped, as Bapu's was an awkward method. He wished Bapu had told Shastri about the step he was now going to take. He did not think that any one in the country had the least idea of Bapu's future action.

After going through the various statements to the press Bapu said, 'There will be peace in the country. Some will speak for a few days and then be silent. But who knows if there is some agitation after my fast? And we need not wonder if the people are quiet, for they are tired. Only we are not tired and are critical in jail.'

As regards the effect of *bajra* cake which he is now taking Bapu said, 'I never took it before along with milk; so I am not in a position to say anything. But we shall wait and see what is the result of this experiment.' I said the dietetic experiments must come to an end on September 20 at the latest. Bapu said his thinking was on different lines altogether. He would think about that day only when it

actually came; and till then his experiments would continue. I said we were not calm like him. Bapu said, 'I know. But if I were not calm, that would be the end of me.'

The Superintendent came and asked why Bapu was going to take such a drastic step. He replied there was no alternative. The Superintendent suspected that Hoare had perhaps not even informed the British Cabinet. Bapu said, 'I believe he must have informed them. But your suspicion is not ill-placed. Hoare is a man of such a type that he might not inform them. And when the Cabinet comes to know of it, he will say he did not think he should worry them with the case of a man who was ready to die for such a trifle. But I think if he did not inform the Cabinet, he would lose his career as well as reputation.' The Superintendent asked what effect Bapu's fast would have in England. 'None', replied Bapu. 'Even if all the "untouchables" in a body ask for joint electorates, the British can say that in the case of a minority which has been suppressed for centuries they alone can decide what is good for it; the suppressors cannot understand its needs.' He then continued, 'My whole life has been passed that way. This last step of mine is the crown of my career. I had no idea that I would have to give up my life for this. But it is a noble object. The beginning was made 50 years ago, when as a child I began to smoke and then felt I was doing the wrong thing and must make a clean breast of it. Since then I have made continuous progress in the knowledge and the practice of truth.'

The Collector came in the afternoon and said: 'What can they do if they are not to give such a decision? There must be some solution. In matters like this you cannot insist upon absolute justice and right.' 'No,' replied Bapu. 'The solution may be unreasonable but it must be acceptable to all. But there is no agreement at the back of this decision. They asked us for a solution in England but they did not see that they were addressing a packed house, and therefore their demand could never be satisfied.'

Then the Collector began to talk about the suppressed classes. He was generalizing from his experiences of those classes in Poona. At last he said, 'It is a most idiotic and undemocratic arrangement, but what else is possible?'

In the morning Bapu said, "It is a law of Satyagraha that when a man has no weapon in his hands and when he cannot think of a way out, he should take the final step of giving up his body. What did the Rajput women do? What did Kamalavati about whom we were reading the other day do? She had resolved that she would not fall alive into the hands of the enemy. She therefore embraced death as a dear friend."

AUGUST 20, 1932

The Sardar and I thought today that the news of Bapu's impending fast should be passed on to the outside world by some means or other. But that was impossible without a breach of Bapu's promise. He has promised that he on his part would never send the news out. And we could not be disloyal to him. The Sardar was very much worried.

Bapu wrote many letters today. In reply to a letter from Chhaganlal Joshi who said he was feeling frustration as a result of the surrounding atmosphere and was impatient to dispose of arrears of work, he wrote :

'Impatience is one of the causes of bodily ailments. The mind is impatient at first and the body follows suit. But haste only makes waste. If the world is on fire, we cannot extinguish it by our impatience. In fact it is not for us to extinguish it at all. Do you know that when there is a big blaze, the firemen do not waste any water on it at all. They only try to save the neighbourhood, and if they succeed in saving it, they are yogis skilful in action. When we have done our individual duty, that is as good as having extinguished the whole of the fire. In appearance it is still burning, but we may rest assured that it has been put out. This is all that I have found as a result of my quest of truth. If it is incorrect, practice of and insistence on Truth (Satyagraha) will be

impossible. We can only insist upon what is possible. It is no use pining after the air of the mountains on the moon, as it is beyond our reach. The same is true of our duty. Every one of us has in fact discovered where his duty lies, for he has not to go far in order to find it. He must only dispose of the refuse in front of him. When he has disposed of it, he will discover more refuse and deal with it. The task of disposing of refuse may be incomplete when life comes to an end. But life never has an end. It is only the body that ends and its end need not worry us. And if life is endless, we should not be tired if the refuse to be disposed of also seems to be endless. The tailor's son will sew clothes till he lives, as they say in Gujarati. If he draws his last breath, needle in hand, he has discharged his duty in the fullest measure.'

To Balkrishna: 'I do not know definitely what Shankaracharya meant by the word *maya*. But I believe that the way in which we look at the world is a figment of our imagination. But the world does exist in its own right. We do not know what it is like. We do not know what *brahma* is like either, and therefore describe it by negatives, *neti neti* ('Not this, not this'). The world also is *brahma*. It is not different from *brahma*. The difference that we notice between the world and *brahma* is only apparent and not real.

'I believe that we can lengthen or shorten our life span. As a matter of fact each body is born along with all its attributes. We do not know, nor do we need to know what these are.

'Man-made divisions of time are a mere drop in the ocean that is eternity. The period in which a man functions is a mere bagatelle, no matter how important he may think himself to be.

'There are innumerable physical causes of dreams. I have felt that we can sense the unreality of a dream in the dream itself during the transition from the dreamy condition to that of being fully awake. Men sometimes have had dreams on account of mechanical reasons even when they did not experience animal passion. In order to get rid of

them, they should change their diet. Constipation is the chief causative factor. Milk causes bad dreams, but then passion is generally the cause, for milk is a stimulant. It is not such in your case, for milk cannot excite passion in a man who is not physically fit, even if the man is passionate by nature. In the case of the physically unfit, the sole function of milk is as a nutrient.

'Service of humanity is an essential element in the character of a wise man. There can be no exception to this rule.

'I cannot say how long I can keep my mind free from all thoughts. But I do know that useless thoughts can never enter my mind. And if they do enter it, they must flee like thieves pursued by the police.'

'Hypocrisy is only the cloak of untruth.'

To many a correspondent Bapu wrote:

'I always expect letters from friends and relatives. Therefore do write to me. I was waiting for your letter as the *chatak* waits for rain drops.'

To Mathuradas: 'The idea at the back of Yajnik dresses is not to give khadi-tailoring work to the poor, but to make khadi woven by the poor readily saleable.

'Do not brood over the passions. When you have once come to a decision, do not be reconsidering it. Taking a vow implies that the mind ceases to think on the subject of that vow any longer. When a merchant has sold some goods, he thinks no more about them, but only about other things. The same is the case with the subject-matter of a vow (*vrata*).'

To X: 'Public opinion means the opinion of the society whose good opinion we value, and it is our duty to respect it so long as it is not immoral. It is difficult to arrive at a correct decision as regards the story in the Ramayan according to which Rama decreed the banishment of Sita on the strength of the remark of the washerman in Ayodhya. Such a decree cannot now win our approval. I have no idea of the author's intention in putting in such an episode in the Ramayan. But there is no need to bother about it. That is not my method of

reading such books. I do believe that if the Ashramites are hurt by certain aspects of my behaviour with young girls, I should stop taking such liberties, which is not a part of my duty and abstinence from which involves no breach of morality. But if this abstinence creates a bad impression among the girls, I would explain things to the Ashramites and then resume the liberties. If the girls will not leave me alone, it will be my lookout to see that no harm is done. No one else may take liberties in imitation of my behaviour. They could come to one spontaneously. No one can artificially resolve that he would behave like that from a particular day ; that would be wrong for him to do. The fact is that he who takes the most innocent of liberties with a guilty mind falls into a pit himself and makes others fall besides. So long as relations between men and women in our society have not been established on a natural basis, we must all walk warily. There is no general rule applicable to all in this matter. Your own behaviour is rather crude. Your natural innocence is an element of safety. But it is improper that you are proud of it and obstinately hold to it. That is mere thoughtlessness. You do not now realize its dangers, but you may have to repent of it some time. Pride goeth before destruction. One must not administer needless shocks to society from an idea that all restrictions in our etiquette are bad in themselves.'

To Ba : 'You will be released in a few days, but will be unable to see me. That will be painful to you as it is to me. I might be inclined to make an exception in your favour and to see you. But you will agree with me that it would be unworthy of me. Our whole life has been founded on renunciation. You will therefore try to be at peace with yourself. Be writing to me.'

AUGUST 21, 1932

We talked about the decision again this morning. We discussed the view of Jayakar, Sapru and Chintamani. Bapu hoped Jayakar would here part company with Sapru. The Sardar said there was not much ground for such hope. Bapu said the only ground was that even in England he

had differed from Sapru on this subject. The Sardar remarked that Chintamani had distinguished himself on the present occasion. Bapu said that was because he was Indian in his outlook, while Sapru was a European. Chintamani realized that much of the constitution was included in the decision, while the others argued that such details did not matter so long as they obtained a constitution. No Indian needed to be told that the best of constitutions in the hands of rogues would be as good as scrapped. And this decision did place the constitution at the mercy of such evil-minded men. The shape of things at the Centre was still to come. The British would reduce it to a fiery furnace and invite them to burn themselves to death in it.

I wondered why Malaviyaji was silent. Bapu said he perhaps thought that nothing could be done in the matter. He was unaware of his [Bapu's] views and was therefore at a loss what to do.

'That is the root of the trouble,' remarked the Sardar. 'You will not let your co-workers know anything till the end and put them in an awkward situation. This is their constant complaint against you. All of them feel that you put them in a position of which they have not the remotest idea.'

'How can that be helped ?' asked Bapu.

'People will tell us,' said the Sardar, 'that we were here with you and should have somehow or other sent the information outside, say through Dahyabhai who sees me every week.'

'That is not to be thought of,' replied Bapu. 'Can we tell them that we would now inform the outside world of this by some means or other ? We have promised to maintain absolute secrecy from our side, and that is the end of the matter so far as we are concerned. You must have noticed that in the letter I have addressed to MacDonald I have said with perfect indifference that if he made it possible, I wanted public opinion to be affected by my letters. What can they do, supposing Malaviyaji and Rajagopalachari come to know about the impending fast this very day ? It is a matter of only a few days. I think it

is necessary to give a slight shock even to these two leaders. Rajaji is a clever man and will at once understand why I was driven to take this step. The shock will help him to understand it. Don't you see that I have advanced no argument in this letter? Could I not have framed a long indictment? But I restricted myself to this one point for which I would gladly sacrifice my life. I had reserved my life for a nobler purpose, but meanwhile this occasion has arisen. What can I do now? The Satyagraha is directed not against Congressmen who are in jail, but against non-Congressmen in order to make them understand what they are doing. Don't you see none of them is at all perturbed by the British Government's proposals as regards "untouchables"? This inertia is sickening, and it cannot be dealt with in any other way. The possible consequences of separate electorate for Harijans fill me with horror. Separate electorate for all other communities will still leave room for me to deal with them, but I have no other means to deal with "untouchables." These poor fellows will ask why I who claim to be their friend should offer Satyagraha simply because they were granted some privileges; they would vote separately but vote with me. They do not realize that the separate electorate will create division among Hindus so much so that it will lead to bloodshed. "Untouchable" hooligans will make common cause with Muslim hooligans and kill caste-Hindus. Has the British Government no idea of all this? I do not think so. And to cap it all, they have brought in Irwin. The Archbishop of Canterbury said they could not do without Irwin's co-operation. And now the Christian Irwin is a party to this nefarious scheme.

'No, no, Vallabhbhai. Previous publication of the news will only do harm; sudden shock is the treatment required. It would be different if you felt that this was a serious blunder. You are both associated with it; and therefore you are responsible to some extent, but the final responsibility rests with me alone, for I have done what suggested itself to me. This is a case in which no one else's consent is necessary. When I fasted during the Bombay

riots, C. R. Das and Motilal Nehru insisted that I should have consulted them before undertaking it. But I explained that the fast was undertaken by me not as a Congressman but as a man. I observed a certain religion and I fasted in accordance with its doctrine. I said the same thing to Hakim Ajmal Khan as regards the fast connected with Hindu-Muslim tension. Now too it is for me a religious and not a political question.

'Embarrassment there will certainly be. Fellow-prisoners for instance may think of fasting in sympathy. To them we shall say: "Such a sympathetic fast must not be undertaken, for it would enable Government to point their finger at us, and would be quite an artificial thing. Fast by all means when the time comes. Mass fasting is not forbidden in Satyagraha law. If Hindu-Muslim riots have broken out and you have tried to restrain the Hindus but cannot do anything more, you may fast in a body. I have not still washed my hands of the question of Hindu-Muslim differences. But I see that the Hindus are not still with me and are inclined to return tit for tat, and therefore I am helpless. If Hindus become non-violent in company with me, I would adopt some such means and resolve the differences." So do not become nervous, and take it from me that you will find later on that this was the right course to adopt.'

AUGUST 22, 1932

Bapu's letter to his daughter-in-law Sushila which exhibits him as a paterfamilias at his best:

'You are a lazy girl, so that your letter of two pages appeared long to you though it seems very short to me. When I was in England, I filled up 20 to 25 sheets in a single letter to my brother and yet felt that it was not long enough. I never imagined that my brother would think it too long and hard to read; indeed I was sure he would like it. You can fill any number of pages if you write about what you have done during the week, the people whom you have seen, the books you have read and the mistakes you

have committed. And when you write to a brother, you put all that into the letter.

'But you are a princess who would write only one line if possible and who thinks much of writing 50 lines with ample space between the words and even the letters. But it is enough if you control Manilal. He is not quite as thoughtful as you are and that is why we have arranged your marriage. I believe that your judgments about people are bound to be sound. Therefore tighten your control a little bit. It is not enough that you simply tell him something because he is your husband. A true wife pulls her husband up and prevents him from falling into a pit. I believe you are able to take such action. Manilal has agreed to treat you not as a slave but as a comrade and better half. Therefore you and he have equal rights on each other. Your rights are greater in this sphere as you have more of intuition. Manilal can mind a machine and practise hydropathy better than you, and therefore he has greater rights in those matters.'

I showed Bapu some questions framed by me as regards the contemplated fast on September 20, and asked him to answer them in writing. But he said he would give oral answers, which I should digest and write out later on. Here is a part of Bapu's answer :

"The two subjects referred to in the letter to Hoare — repression, and separate electorates — differ in kind, and there can be no comparison between them. Satyagraha against repression can be considered only after a great deal of thought, whereas as regards separate electorates I came to a very quick decision to offer Satyagraha which was a natural thing and to which I saw no alternative. Even if I had been a free man, I might perhaps have had to resort to a fast. But then I would have organized a great agitation and made separate electorate for untouchables simply impossible. This fast is directed not against the British Government but against Muslims, Hindus, the British people and others whom it seeks to wake up from their torpor. It is not essential that those at whom a fast is directed should understand the necessity of it. Suppose

I receive today the news that some Muslims have abducted an Ashram girl. In that case I would commence a fast here and now and ask the Government to inform the Muslims about it and to tell them that this was the remedy left for me if a community of whom I had always been a well-wisher and for whom I would willingly lay down my life if such an occasion arose could put up with such an outrage. The suppressed classes are in great peril today. The pity of it is that no one else is aware of it. It may be that when I am released, the situation might have deteriorated to such an extent that it cannot be retrieved. Numerous "untouchables" might have been converted to Islam or else the caste Hindus might have crushed them into submission. This part of the British Government's decision seems so dangerous to me that even if all other parts had been acceptable, I would have been compelled to take such a step in order to combat it."

AUGUST 23, 1932

Some of Bapu's observations yesterday will never be forgotten: 'I do not at all feel that I am wasting my time in jail. I do a great deal of work. I guide many workers. Not a single minute of my time is wasted. Civil death applies only to such activities as have been obnoxious to the foreign Government. As regards all other things we can put in as much work as we like. If I could see all the parties concerned in the matter of Dr Mehta, I would suggest a solution acceptable to all. You see how I am guiding the Manager of Satyagraha Ashram.'

Darbari Sadhu wrote to Bapu, saying that aimless thoughts were certainly burdensome but it seemed as if even the seeker of truth had to pass through the stage of wandering thoughts. It was true that selfless action purified the mind, but after some purification had not the seeker quietly to observe his mental activity? Or was the selfless action sufficient in itself? Buddha recommended a combination of activity and contemplation with some such end in view. Bapu however was all for action, which according to him was the royal road to self-perfection. But

did it enable the seeker to understand the activity of the soul?

To him Bapu replied: 'Wandering thoughts can never be a stage in spiritual development. They do trouble most of us; hence the usual emphasis laid on mental concentration. What we have to bear in mind is this. We think a multitude of thoughts which involve a waste of mental energy even as sensuality results in the waste of vital energy. Just as physical debility affects the mind, so also mental debility affects the body. Therefore I understand *brahmacharya* in a comprehensive sense and look upon aimless thinking as a breach of it. We have made *brahmacharya* difficult to achieve by understanding it in a narrow sense. But if we accept the broader definition and try to restrain all the eleven organs of sense, the control of animal passion becomes comparatively very much easier. You seem to think that external action leaves little time for a review of mental purification. But my experience is just the reverse of it. Without mental purity external action cannot be performed in a selfless spirit. Therefore mental purity can be measured in terms of the purity of external action. One who tries to attain mental purity without purifying external action runs the risk of going astray. I can think of many a case of that type. But let us take an ordinary illustration. I have seen many co-workers making various good resolutions in jail. But as soon as they were out of it, they broke them at the very first opportunity. In jail they were certain that they would never swerve from their resolution, that they had achieved mental purity and concentration in prayer. But it all came to nothing directly they were out of prison walls. A marvellous verse * in the Gita (III, 5) lays down a law which physicists have shown is universal in application. It may be translated thus: † No one can remain even for a moment without doing work. Work here means motion of

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* न हि कश्चित् क्षणमपि जातु तिष्ठत्यकर्मकृत् ।
कार्यते ह्यवशः कर्म सर्वः प्रकृतिजैर्गुणैः ॥ *Ed.*

† Radhakrishnan's *Bhagavadgita*, Allen and Unwin. *Ed.*

inanimate as well as animate beings. It is characteristic of human beings that they may obey this law in a selfless spirit. There are two equally marvellous ‡ verses in Isha Upanishad which are complementary to the Gita verse. It is not for me to criticize Buddha of whom I am a worshipper. And who knows whether the organization of the Buddhist monks was due to Buddha himself or to his successors? However that may be, the Sangha became inert and lazy in obedience to this universal law. Even today most Buddhist priests in Ceylon, Burma and Tibet are unintelligent idlers. In India too most of the so-called *sannyasis* scarcely distinguish themselves. I therefore am of opinion that real and lasting purity of mind can only be attained through continuous work. We are told in verse 18 of the Fourth Chapter of the Gita that he who sees inaction in action and action in inaction is a wise and perfect worker, a *yogi*. All this is part of my own experience. I have cited the verses because the Gita doctrine tallies with it. I never cite scripture unless I have subjected it to the test of personal experience. The experience of others may be different from mine, and they too may perhaps find a Gita verse in support of it. It is also possible that they might interpret these verses in a different way in order to seek corroboration of their experience. I may not therefore insist upon my experience being acknowledged as valid by all.'

Bapu asked us if we had any doubts about the propriety of his intended fast. The Sardar replied: 'Everything will become clear at the end of it, though it is not so now. And what is the use of arguing with you now? What was to happen has come to pass. You wrote that letter and therefore they came to this decision. They would be glad if they were able to get rid of you somehow or other.'

When it sometimes rains at night, Bapu's cot has to be lifted and brought to the verandah with some difficulty.

‡ The reference here is to कुर्वन्नेवेह कर्माणि जिजीविषेत् शतं समाः। and कृतं स्मर। *Ed.*

He therefore asked the Major for a lighter cot. The Major in his turn asked if a cot with coir string would do. Bapu replied, 'Yes'. But the Major proposed that if Bapu wished, he would replace the coir string with cotton tape.

The cot was brought to our ward in the evening. Bapu liked it and said he did not require cotton tape, and his mattress should be placed on the new cot from today onwards. But the Sardar objected and said, 'No, no. There is enough of coir in the mattress itself. Coir string under it will only make matters worse.'

Bapu : 'But will you not agree that the coir string will be easy to keep clean ?'

The Sardar : 'You are a wonderful man. The new cot is very much like the frame on which we carry dead bodies to the burning ground ; all we have to do is to place four coconuts on the four corners. It will not do at all. I will get cotton tape for it tomorrow.'

Bapu : 'No, no, Vallabhbhai. Cotton tape will gather dust and cannot be washed. On the other hand you have only to pour water on the coir string, and it will be quite clean.'

The Sardar : 'The cotton tape has only to be given to the washerman who will return it the very next day.'

Bapu : 'But the coir string has not to be taken off the cot, and can be washed as it is.'

I : 'Yes, Bapu. We can pour hot water on it and it will not harbour bugs.'

The Sardar : 'Now you too have sided with Bapu. But you do not know that the coir string will be an ideal breeding ground for bugs.'

Bapu : 'I will sleep on the coir-string cot. You may get a cotton tape one for yourself. I remember that we used coir-string cots in our house when I was a child. My mother used to rub fresh ginger on it.'

I : 'What is that ? I do not understand what she did.'

Bapu : 'When she had to prepare ginger pickle, the ginger skin was not removed with a knife, but by rubbing it against the coir string.'

The Sardar: 'This cot will similarly take the skin off your handful of bones. So I say, get cotton tape instead of coir string.'

Bapu: 'And cotton tape on this cot will be like a red bridle for an old, decrepit horse. Coir string is the thing for it. Then again it never rots.'

The Sardar: 'Do as you please if you will not accept my advice.'

Bapu got the cot removed into the courtyard from the verandah.

'What if it rains?' asked the Sardar.

'We shall take it back to the verandah,' replied Bapu.

The Sardar: ततो दुःखतरं नु किम्।

Bapu: 'I knew you were putting the question in order to be able to make use of this Gita quotation.'

AUGUST 24, 1932

As today is Janmashtami, a jail holiday, the caravan did not visit our ward. Bapu said, 'Hold yourself in readiness. If they propose to transfer you elsewhere, now is the time.' I said the British Government were on the horns of a dilemma. It was difficult for them to let Bapu fast in prison; it was equally difficult to let him fast as a free man. The Sardar remarked that Bapu's very existence was a threat to them. They proposed to fight to the finish. They would therefore stick at nothing this time. They would say: 'Let him die if he is to die and we will face the consequences.'

Bapu is doing his normal work energetically as if nothing had happened. Today he wrote as many as 22 letters big and small with his own hand. Arrears of the post must be cleared at any cost. Many of the letters were intended to deal with the situation created by the death of Dr Mehta. Some of them were addressed to little children. There were letters from Esther Menon's seven-year-old daughter and her English friends. A four-year-old girl wrote: 'My mother tells me you are a very good man; we are therefore writing to you. You also please write to us.' Another girl wrote: 'We are working in order to

prevent war and making posters. God bless you.' To them Bapu wrote, preaching non-violence as always:

'My dear little friends,

'I was delighted to have your sweet notes with funny drawings made by you. You do not mind my sending one note for all of you. After all you are all one in mind, though not in body. Yes, it is little children like you who will stop all war. This means that you never quarrel with other boys and girls or among yourselves. You cannot stop big wars, if you carry on little wars yourselves. How I wish I was there to celebrate Nani's and Anna's birthday. May God bless you all. My kisses to you all if you will let me kiss you, and Nani will pass on my love to Esther. Won't she?'

AUGUST 25, 1932

Bapu said: 'The British Government can place me in an awkward position. They may release me before the 20th without assigning any reasons and let me do what I like. If they release me a few days before the 20th I think I would undertake a hurricane tour and even go to Bengal instead of fasting. But it is also possible that I may have to fast according to the programme even if I am released before the 20th. However that may be, we shall know something this very week.'

After a little while he added: 'Let them try to put me in trouble. Still they will lose and we shall win through.'

AUGUST 26, 1932

As Bapu had anticipated yesterday, Doyle called Bapu this morning for a talk. He said Bapu should have an excellent denture and wished he would use it for many a year. He informed him (Bapu) about Kaka Kalelkar who got clothes and diet. Kaka passed through Poona yesterday and would be in Ahmedabad now. He asked Bapu to prevail upon Kaka to give up spinning so that he might be free from backache. Doyle then referred to the fast and

said he was speaking only in his personal capacity and not on behalf of Government. Could not Bapu reconsider his decision? He should correspond with Government on all doubtful questions. Bapu replied that Government had left no other course open for him and he had given them as much as six months' notice. Doyle then suggested that necessary changes could be effected through legislation and asked why he was placing the jail department too in difficulty by resorting to such an extreme measure. He had sent Bapu's wire the same day, and the next day the whole letter was sent by cable to England.

Bapu remarked that Doyle talked today with more than his usual urbanity. He asked Bapu to write to him on any subject he liked. Bapu laughed and said that was because Doyle thought he would not now be in his charge for long.

About the civil surgeon Bapu said, 'We thought he was a haughty man, but we were wrong. He is a fine fellow. I observed his eyes for a long time and saw goodness therein. Doyle is so good to us but he is rather a cunning fellow. This man is not cunning.'

August 27, 1932

Bapu gave the Major his letters to Ba and Kaka Kalelkar to be sent to Advani. About Ba he said, 'She is said to have lost 16 pounds in weight, but it must be an exaggeration, as in that case she would be reduced to a skeleton.' The Major said it might be true, for Advani had written to Doyle that her weight was going down and she refused to take more butter though pressed to do so. Doyle replied that they could not compel her in the matter and should do what they could as medical men.

The Superintendent said he had orders to buy second-quality foodgrains, but he bought first-quality grain, as inferior food was costlier in the long run. The prisoners fell ill and had to be given medical treatment.

Bapu had lectured to the Superintendent a few days ago on the evils of gambling on the race-course. He said we

imitated only the vices of the West, and gave no thought to the fact that such gambling had destroyed many families. The Superintendent said X had sustained losses, Y had lost his reputation and Z his whole fortune on the race-course, but he himself betted only in moderation which was great fun.

AUGUST 28, 1932

Mrs X wrote that she was going to marry Y and asked Bapu to bless the marriage. Bapu sent her his blessings hoping that they would have a long and happy married life and would always devote themselves to service, for then only would their union be considered proper and successful. This is the first time that Bapu has permitted a Hindu woman to contract a second marriage during the life-time of the first husband.

To Miss Elizabeth Howard who sent the report of a fellowship meeting in England Bapu replied :

'This fellowship is a difficult thing. It can come only through constant practice in all walks of life and among all the different races and nationalities.'

Bapu disposed of the Ashram post today before noon, though there were as many as 54 letters.

To the children : 'Learn properly all that is taught in the Ashram. Remember that the highest of all learning is truth.'

Bapu is sowing the seeds of revolt everywhere, as witness this note :

'You must acquaint yourself with the history of the young man to whom you have been betrothed. If you do not like him, you should break off the engagement. In order to be able to do this, you must give up false shame. You must however be courteous and ready to suffer. And your purity must be great enough to impress everybody.'

'When you are angry, be silent, take Ramanama and overcome your anger.'

In every outgoing letter Bapu bestows unstinted praise on the Sardar for his envelopes and Sanskrit

studies. He wrote to Kaka yesterday that the Sardar was progressing in his studies at Uchchaihshrava's speed. To-day he wrote to Pyarelal :

'The Sardar is advancing in his studies like an Arab horse. The Sanskrit book is always in his hand. I had never entertained such high hopes of him. No one can beat him at making envelopes. He makes them without taking any measurements, and cuts them accurately, though he judges only with his eyes. And yet he does not appear to spend much time over it. His orderliness is marvellous. Whatever is to be done, he does it here and now so that he has not to tax his memory. Since he has taken up spinning, he begins it punctually at the appointed hour, so that he is progressing as regards both speed and the quality of his yarn. He hardly ever forgets anything that he has taken up and he is so regular that bustle and hurry are out of the question.'

To X who said she proposed to remain a virgin all her life, Bapu wrote : 'I like the idea, but I have known many young men and women practising self-deception. One who would observe chastity in its fullness must be truthful and conceal nothing. She should know the meaning of *brahmacharya* with all its implications. It is no small thing to subdue animal passion. For this one has to give up all sensual enjoyments. That is to say, she does what she has to do not with a view to enjoyment but as a necessity. She will therefore eschew all that is unnecessary. She observes this rule in food and drink, dress and everything else. If you think you are capable of all this, well and good. Otherwise you should humbly admit your inability and act as most other girls do. You will then have done the right thing. Attempt nothing beyond your capacity.'

To Y as regards the few minutes' silence at prayer time : 'Five minutes' silence during the evening prayer was suggested by me. It would be better to have the same period of silence in the morning also. If the congregation has its heart in the matter, all sounds must cease by and by. Even the children would learn to co-operate. I have

attended meetings where silence was observed for half an hour in England. Silence is looked upon as a very important thing among our people. *Samadhi* means silence. *Muni* (sage) and *mauna* (sagehood, silence) are both derived from the same root. It is true that when we practise silence at first, many thoughts enter our minds and we even begin to doze. Silence is intended to remedy these defects. We are accustomed to talk much and hear loud sounds. Silence therefore seems difficult. A little practice however enables us to like it, and when we like it, it gives us a sense of ineffable peace. We are seekers of truth. We must therefore understand what silence means and observe it accordingly. We can certainly take Ramanama during silence. The fact is that we should prepare the mind for it. We shall realize its value if we bestow a little thought on it. Can we not sit steadily in the congregation for five minutes? Have you ever been at a dramatic performance? Talking is prohibited in many theatres. Enthusiasts like myself will be there an hour before the play begins. In their enthusiasm they do not mind being silent for that hour. But that is not all. The play takes 4 or 5 hours, during which the spectator has to observe silence. But he likes it all the same. The silence is not burdensome to him because his mind is attuned to it. Why then can we not be silent for 5 minutes for God's sake? If there is a flaw in this argument, do let me know. But if it is sound, keep silence with interest and plead on my behalf with those who are opposed to it.

'Let us not imagine that we must bear with only those faults to which we ourselves are prone.

'I hold that we should give shelter to all who are trying to improve themselves. Tulsidas tells us that even God can do nothing for the man who looks upon his own defects as qualities.'

Parshuram's letter made Bapu laugh so loud that he could not read it through. I read to him the rest of it. He then wrote to him (P.): 'Your little book of nine pages made me laugh heartily. It was only once before when I took some *bhang* in youth that I thus shook my sides.

'Arjun's defeat at the hands of ordinary highwaymen, and the end of the victors in Himalayan snows are intended by the author of the Mahabharat to show the futility of war with weapons of steel. Bhagavan (the Lord) has given a description of Himself in the Gita ; that is to say, the author of the Gita has put this description in His mouth. But as a matter of fact God has no shape and never talks like man. Then the question is : Is it proper to put such speeches in the mouth of the Lord ? I answer yes. The Lord is omnipotent and omniscient. The speech of one who is omniscient must be truthful. It cannot therefore count as boasting. A man cannot similarly take a measure of his own powers ; therefore such language in his mouth would be inappropriate. But when the occasion arises, a man may say that his height is so many feet so many inches. He then does not boast but only tells the truth. If a man 6 feet tall says that he is 5 feet in height, that is not modesty, but sheer ignorance or hypocrisy.'

To X : 'Our women do not attempt the conquest of passion. They know how to be wives, not sisters. To be a sister one needs great power of renunciation. To my mind it is clear that a wife can never become a complete sister. A sister is such to all the world while a wife hands herself over to one man. Wifehood is needed, but has not to be cultivated, as it includes the possibility of satisfaction of passion. But it is difficult to become the world's sister. It is possible only for one for whom *brahmacharya* is a natural condition and who is fired by the spirit of service.'

Answering the question why the children of good parents sometimes turn out to be bad and those of bad parents turn out to be good, Bapu wrote : 'What is the test for goodness in parents ? Who can say what was their mental condition when the child was conceived ? It therefore seems to be best to believe that the fruit of a good tree must be invariably good. The rule may appear to have exceptions, but that is due to our ignorance.

'*Daiva* can never be nullified, taking it in the sense of the influence of former actions.

'Men must cease to be beasts if women of ill fame are to be rehabilitated. So long as there are beasts in man's shape, there must be beasts in woman's shape too. If such women give up their vile occupation and turn over a new leaf, respectable men would certainly marry them. Once a prostitute, always a prostitute — is not a sound proposition.'

In this week's letter to the Ashram Bapu explained the difference between thoughtful and thoughtless action and the implications of Ashramites cleaning their own sanitary conveniences and thus rendering invaluable service.

August 29, 1932

In a letter to Hiralal Bapu wrote something like this: 'I look upon myself as a dull person. I take more time than others in understanding some things, but I do not care. There is a limit to man's progress in intelligence; but the development of the qualities of the heart knows no bounds.'

I forgot to copy this out in my notebook.

August 30, 1932

Kanti gave the Major a note for Bapu, which he sent to the Inspector-General of Prisons instead of giving it to Bapu. We were all offended at this. He should have withheld the note if he wished, but why should he send it to the I.-G.P.? He perhaps wished to curry favour with the Government or to bring to the I.-G.P.'s notice concessions granted to prisoners in Visapur jail and to make him think badly of the jail officials at Visapur.

The Major came this morning and said there was nothing objectionable in that note, but the I.-G.P. had told him that he (the I.-G.P.) had not permitted prisoners to spin in any of the jails in his charge. But Kanti had written in his note that 1100 prisoners spun at Visapur. He therefore asked the I.-G.P. why prisoners in Yeravda could not be permitted to spin as in Visapur.

When the Superintendent left Bapu said we had been doing him an injustice. The Sardar said he was right in his own conjecture that the Major wanted to stop spinning in

other jails too. 'No, no', said Bapu. 'My heart begs his pardon, in so far as I had done him the injustice to think that he had tried to injure other jail officials.' The Sardar stuck to his guns and said that when concessions granted in one jail came to the notice of officers in another jail and became the subject of an inquiry, they were invariably withdrawn. Bapu asked why the Superintendent should not make a request that concessions granted to prisoners elsewhere should be available to his own prisoners too.

AUGUST 31, 1932

Nothing is still out as regards the fast. Bapu said he would not be surprised if the British Government in their pride took no notice of it at all. C.P. asks how Government can be reconciled to Congress so long as the Civil Disobedience movement is not discontinued; and what the Liberals can have to do with it, as they are opposed to the movement.

Received a note from Jerajani's niece written in the Esplanade magistrate's court just before she was taken to jail. She borrowed a piece of paper from some one present there and wrote: 'At last, Bapu, I too am entering the temple of Liberty. I received your letter only today.' Bapu asked if after seeing this note any one could say that Congress was dead.

A short message of greetings and love from Miss Wilkinson, Miss Whately, Esther Menon and Matters: 'The little group of the India League whom you were good enough to meet in England is still at its work. We send you this note as we are not permitted to see you.'

Mirabehn is now writing regularly from Arthur Road prison on the day of silence, and gives the fullest details about her diet, clothes and work. I wish all of us had her faith, loyalty and devotion.

SEPTEMBER 1, 1932

In writing to the teacher of Dilip, Mathuradas' son, Bapu took the opportunity to express his views on education:

'I have always been inclined to think that by teaching children बाराखडी (क, का, कि, की etc.) in the very first instance we check the development of their intelligence and spoil their handwriting. I hold that before teaching them the vowel combinations with Devanagari consonants we should orally impart to them much general knowledge, such as the history and geography of their native town or village and then something about the province, the country and the world, nature study, the sky, the trees and other vegetation, oral arithmetic, geometry, literature, i.e. correct pronunciation, grammar, poetry, Sanskrit shlokas (verses) etc. A knowledge of reading and writing is not a pre-requisite for any of these things. The child should be taught to read before he learns to write. Writing should be taught last of all. Before the child writes the *barakhadi*, he should be taught simple drawing of straight and curved lines, triangles etc. If this system is followed, the child will be spared much trouble ; it will have acquired much knowledge from the teachers' talks, and it will write a fine hand. There is one whole chapter in *Dasabodha* * on letters which is worth reading. I have been led to write all this on seeing Dilip's handwriting. You may adopt what part of it you can and forget the rest. My bad hand which is due to improper education is a proof of the correctness of the programme I have outlined.'

Bapu said Doctor Mehta had tried to give his daughters higher education of the modern type, and engaged a piano teacher. I said one who learned to play on the piano would expect to have a piano in her house. 'Certainly,' said Bapu. 'I bought a piano for Manilal. It may still be there in Phoenix if he has not sold it. I did not sell it at any rate. It was very useful to us. Many hymns at our prayers were sung to its accompaniment. Kitchin, West, Royeppen, all played on it. Husain played on it and sang †है बहारे बाग दुनिया चंद रोज। He had such an exquisitely sweet voice that it was difficult to distinguish

* A Marathi book by Ramdas. *Ed.*

† 'The garden of this world has only a momentary bloom.' *Ed.*

between the music of his throat and the tune of the instrument.'

SEPTEMBER 2, 1932

Dahyabhai saw the Sardar today.

Bapu now writes most of the letters with his own hand, the letter to Narandas Gandhi excepted.

In a letter to X Bapu expanded his statement in the letter to Hiralal :

'It may fairly be said that intellect has played a subordinate part in my life. I think I am a dull person. It is literally true in my case that God provides the man of faith with such intelligence as he needs. I have always honoured and reposed faith in elders and wise men. But my deepest faith is in truth, so that my path though difficult to tread has seemed easy to me.'

To X : 'Have faith that God will give you the strength to oppose the most devilish of men with success. Never fear. In such an emergency, put forth all the strength that you are capable of. That will not count as violence. A mouse cannot do violence to a cat. But if it wishes, it can make sure that the cat cannot eat it alive. A mouse who thus foils the cat's purpose does not do it violence. Remember that the man of evil purpose is inherently weak. He simply cannot bear the fierce light that emanates from a woman of purity ; he shakes with fear at her shout.'

To Y : 'Do not so love a person that you are afraid of his being offended at every step. We must have confidence that a friend can never be offended at our conduct. If this confidence is absent, we are likely to do him an injustice.'

Raihana sent Bapu a beautiful poem of Zafar, the last part of which may be translated as follows :

'I freed myself from it and jumped away. I then saw that it was only the net of egotism ; there was no actual snare or cage.' How true !

SEPTEMBER 3, 1932

A letter from X in which he wrote that he had given up all interest in his landlord father's property, as he had

thrown in his lot with his father's tenants. Bapu wrote him a congratulatory letter.

Upon reading the news that Kanjibhai's son had been arrested Bapu said :

'The weakness which has beset some elements in the country does not cause me surprise, nor am I surprised by whole families immolating themselves. We now witness both kinds of scenes.'

September 4, 1932

Bapu and the Sardar finished eight months in jail today. Bapu remarked that I had finished seven. The Sardar said, 'Yes, but पर्याप्तमिदमेतेषाम् । His term is पर्याप्त (limited) while ours is the reverse.'

There was a complaint that X's letters from Rangoon were all dictated by Y. Bapu was unwilling to believe it at first, but Y himself admitted it by wire. Bapu sent X a copy of the wire and asked him to fulfil the promises made in those letters. The Sardar said Bapu should not send him a copy of the wire but ask him if the complaint which he had received was true. He would then be caught as in a trap. Bapu did not like this suggestion, as it savoured of violence. He said : 'To give a man the opportunity to lie and to make him lie is tantamount to violence. On the other hand to place before him all the facts in our possession and not to give him the opportunity to tell a lie is mercy in its fullest measure.' This little incident throws light on the difference between Bapu's and the Sardar's mentality.

Bapu wrote today a note on what girls should do in case of an intended assault, in which he suggested that a non-violent girl conscious of her purity should slap the miscreant in righteous indignation and thus try to put him to shame. But if he persisted still, she should be ready to face death. The slap would be non-violent as it was intended to place the other party on his guard. I do not care whether the slap is violent or non-violent, but I feel that the slap might work in the case of an acquaintance,

but not in the case of a hooligan who would bind the girl's hands and feet, gag her and then do his evil deed.

In order to resolve my doubts Bapu wrote as follows : 'You have not fully understood the gist of my article. I have suggested that the slap is an awakener and inspirer of courage and above all the will to die. The hooligan is not ready for such, to his mind fruitless opposition. He is therefore likely to withdraw. But that is not of much consequence. The accession of strength in the woman concerned is sufficient to enable her to die but not to yield. And she is already dead before the hooligan finishes his fight with her. She fights like one who is almost dead ; she has no idea of striking a blow ; she is intent only on death. This method is to be followed by women who are pure and who would defend themselves non-violently. And it was suggested to me by my personal experience. When I held * the railing with all the strength at my command, I prepared myself to die. I could not have harmed my opponent. But if my hands had let go the hold, I would have struggled with him, perhaps slapped him, bitten him with my teeth and fought unto death. In spite of such fighting, I would not have been guilty of violence, for I was unable to injure the opponent, and I had no such intention either. My only object was to die and to avoid the necessity of sitting at the opponent's feet. This is the test of *ahimsa* : it implies the absence of any intention to inflict hurt as well as of actual hurt.'

I : 'I understand, but the purest of girls cannot subdue the hooligan with one slap and is helpless if she has to face a number of them.'

Bapu : 'Not only I but medical jurisprudence holds it impossible for a woman to be outraged so long as she does not relax. A woman who is not ready to die relaxes, may be reluctantly, and submits to the hooligan. A desperate animal breaks its bonds or else breaks itself, and every animal is capable of exerting this much strength. The fact

* See the *Autobiography*, Part II, Chapter IX, p. 144 in the 1948 edition. *Ed.*

is that love of life is too strong for one to hold fast till death comes as a saviour. A woman who puts forth the utmost strength will break her own ribs in fighting against the enemy.'

I: 'To a woman of such purity it is not necessary to suggest slapping or anything of that kind. She will think out some plan or other herself.'

Bapu: 'I may explain it all when I break the silence.'

Mrs Satyavati Chidambar, an Indian Christian, wrote to Bapu suggesting that he should accept Christ, and give him a chance in his heart and in his life, for one cannot be an orthodox Hindu and follow the principles in the Sermon on the Mount. Jesus was the only Saviour of the world.

To her Bapu replied as follows:

'Dear sister,

'I have your letter. Why do you think that the truth lies only in believing in Jesus as you do? Again why do you think that an orthodox Hindu cannot follow out the precepts of the Sermon on the Mount? Are you sure of your knowledge of an orthodox Hindu? And then again are you sure that you know Jesus and His teachings? I admire your zeal but I cannot congratulate you upon your wisdom. My fortyfive years of prayer and meditation have not only left me without the assurance of the type you credit yourself with, but has left me humbler than ever. The answer to my prayer is clear and emphatic that God is not encased in a safe to be approached only through a little hole bored in it, but that He is open to be approached through billions of openings by those who are humble and pure of heart. I invite you to step down from your pinnacle where you have left room for none but yourself. With love and prayer.

Your sincerely,
M. K. Gandhi'

To X: 'I am not a defeatist like you, but hope to melt the stoniest of hearts by the grace of God and am always striving to that end.'

Appendix I

THE GREAT SPEECH *

I can understand the claims advanced by other minorities, but the claim advanced on behalf of the 'untouchables' is to me the unkindest cut of all. It means perpetual bar sinister.

I would not sell the vital interests of the 'untouchables' even for the sake of winning the freedom of India. I claim myself, in my own person, to represent the vast mass of the 'untouchables.' Here I speak not merely on behalf of the Congress, but I speak on my own behalf, and I claim that I would get, if there was a referendum of the 'untouchables,' their vote, and that I would top the poll. And I would work from one end of India to the other to tell the 'untouchables' that separate electorates and separate reservation is not the way to remove this bar sinister.

Let this Committee and let the whole world know that today there is a body of Hindu reformers who feel that this is a shame, not of the 'untouchables,' but of orthodox Hinduism, and they are therefore pledged to remove this blot of untouchability. We do not want on our register and on our census 'untouchables' classified as a separate class. Sikhs may remain as such in perpetuity, so may Muslims, so may Europeans. Would 'untouchables' remain untouchables in perpetuity? I would far rather that Hinduism died than that untouchability lived.

Therefore, with all my regard for Dr Ambedkar and for his desire to see the 'untouchables' uplifted, with all my regard for his ability, I must say that here is a great error under which he has laboured and perhaps, the bitter experiences he has undergone have for the moment warped his judgement. It hurts me to have to say this, but I would be untrue to the cause of 'untouchables,' which is as dear to me as life itself, if I did not say it. I will not bargain

* Extract from Gandhiji's speech at the last meeting of the Minorities Committee, on November 13, 1931.

away their rights for the kingdom of the whole world. I am speaking with a due sense of responsibility when I say it is not a proper claim which is registered by Dr Ambedkar, when he seeks to speak for the whole of the 'untouchables' in India. It will create a division in Hinduism which I cannot possibly look forward to with any satisfaction whatsoever.

I do not mind the 'untouchables' being converted to Islam or Christianity. I should tolerate that, but I cannot possibly tolerate what is in store for Hinduism if there are these two divisions set up in every village. Those who speak of political rights of 'untouchables' do not know India and do not know how Indian society is today constructed. Therefore, I want to say with all the emphasis that I can command, that if I was the only person to resist this thing, I WILL RESIST IT WITH MY LIFE.

Appendix II

THE GREAT LETTER

Yeravda Central Prison,
March 11, 1932

Dear Sir Samuel,

You will perhaps recollect that at the end of my speech at the Round Table Conference when the minorities' claim was presented, I had said that I should resist with my life the grant of separate electorate to the depressed classes. This was not said in the heat of the moment nor by way of rhetoric. It was meant to be a serious statement. In pursuance of that statement I had hoped on my return to India to mobilize public opinion against separate electorate, at any rate for the depressed classes. But it was not to be.

From the newspapers I am permitted to read I observe that any moment His Majesty's Government may declare their decision. At first I had thought, if the decision was found to create separate electorates for the Depressed Classes, I should take such steps as I might then consider necessary to give effect to my vow. But I feel it would be

unfair to the British Government for me to act without giving previous notice. Naturally, they could not attach the significance I give to my statement.

I need hardly reiterate all the objections I have to the creation of separate electorates for the depressed classes. I feel as if I was one of them. Their case stands on a wholly different footing from that of others. I am not against their representation in the legislatures. I should favour every one of their adults, male and female, being registered as voters irrespective of education or property qualification, even though the franchise test may be stricter for others. But I hold that separate electorate is harmful for them and for Hinduism, whatever it may be from the purely political standpoint. To appreciate the harm that separate electorates would do them one has to know how they are distributed amongst the so-called caste Hindus and how dependent they are on the latter. So far as Hinduism is concerned, separate electorate would simply vivisect and disrupt it.

For me the question of these classes is predominantly moral and religious. The political aspect, important though it is, dwindles into insignificance compared with the moral and religious issue.

You will have to appreciate my feelings in this matter by remembering that I have been interested in the condition of these classes from my boyhood and have more than once staked my all for their sake. I say this not to pride myself in any way. For I feel that no penance that the Hindus may do can in any way compensate for the calculated degradation to which they have consigned the depressed classes for centuries.

But I know that separate electorate is neither a penance nor any remedy for the crushing degradation they have groaned under. I, therefore, respectfully inform His Majesty's Government that in the event of their decision creating separate electorate for the depressed classes, I MUST FAST UNTO DEATH.

I am painfully conscious of the fact that such a step, whilst I am a prisoner, must cause grave embarrassment

to His Majesty's Government, and that it will be regarded by many as highly improper on the part of one holding my position to introduce into the political field methods which they would describe as hysterical if not much worse. All I can urge in defence is that for me the contemplated step is not a method, it is part of my being. It is the call of conscience which I dare not disobey, even though it may cost whatever reputation for sanity I may possess. So far as I can see now, my discharge from imprisonment would not make the duty of fasting any the less imperative. I am hoping, however, all my fears are wholly unjustified and the British Government have no intention whatever of creating separate electorate for the depressed classes.

It is, perhaps, as well for me to refer to another matter that is agitating me and may also enforce a similar fast. It is the way that repression is going. I have no notion when I may receive a shock that would compel the sacrifice. Repression appears to me to be crossing what might be called legitimate bounds. A governmental terrorism is spreading through the land. English and Indian officials are being brutalized. The latter, high and low, are becoming demoralized by reason of Government regarding as meritorious disloyalty to the people and inhuman conduct towards their own kith and kin. The latter are becoming cowed down. Free speech has been stifled. Goondaism(hooliganism) is being practised in the name of law and order. Women, who have come out for public service, stand in fear of their honour being insulted.

And all this, as it seems to me, is being done in order to crush the spirit of freedom which the Congress represents. Repression is not confined to punishing civil breaches of common law. It goads people to break newly made orders of autocracy designed for the most part to humiliate them.

In all these doings, as I read them, I see no spirit of democracy. Indeed, my recent visit to England has confirmed my opinion that your democracy is a superficial, circumscribed thing. In the weightiest matters decisions

are taken by individuals or groups without any reference to Parliament, and these have been ratified by members having but a vague notion of what they were doing. Such was the case with Egypt, the War of 1914, and such is the case with India. My whole being rebels against the idea that in a system called democratic one man should have unfettered power of affecting the destiny of an ancient people numbering over three hundred millions and that his decisions can be enforced by mobilizing the most terrible forces of destruction. To me this is a negation of democracy.

And this repression cannot be prolonged without further embittering the already bitter relations between the two peoples. In so far as I am responsible and can help it, how am I to arrest the process? Not by stopping Civil Disobedience. For me it is an article of faith. I regard myself by nature a democrat. The democracy of my conception is wholly inconsistent with the use of physical force for enforcing its will. Civil resistance, therefore, has been conceived to be a proper substitute for physical force to be used wherever generally the latter is held to be necessary or justifiable. It is a process of self-suffering, and part of the plan is that in given circumstances a civil resister must sacrifice himself even by fasting to a finish. That moment has not yet arrived for me. I have no undeniable call from within for such a step. But events happening outside are alarming enough to agitate my fundamental being. Therefore, in writing to you about the possibility of a fast regarding the depressed classes, I felt I would be untrue to you if I did not tell you also that there was another possibility, not remote, of such a fast.

Needless to say, from my side absolute secrecy has been maintained about all the correspondence I have carried on with you. Of course Sardar Vallabhbhai Patel and Mahadev Desai, who has just been sent to join us, know all about it. But you will no doubt make whatever use you wish of this letter.

Yours sincerely,
M. K. Gandhi

Appendix III

THE NOTICE TO THE BRITISH PREMIER

Yeravda Central Prison,
August 18, 1932

Dear friend,

There can be no doubt that Sir Samuel Hoare has showed you and the Cabinet my letter to him of 11th March on the question of the representation of the Depressed Classes. That letter should be treated as part of this letter and be read together with this.

I have read the British Government's decision on the representation of minorities and have slept over it. In pursuance of my letter to Sir Samuel Hoare and my declaration at the meeting of the Minorities Committee of the Round Table Conference on 13th November 1931 at St. James' Palace, I have to resist your decision with my life. The only way I can do so is by declaring a perpetual fast unto death from food of any kind save water with or without salt and soda. This fast will cease if during its progress the British Government, of its own motion or under pressure of public opinion, revise their decision and withdraw their scheme of communal electorates for the Depressed Classes, whose representatives should be elected by the general electorate under the common franchise, no matter how wide it is.

The proposed fast will come into operation in the ordinary course from the noon of 20th September next, unless the said decision is meanwhile revised in the manner suggested above.

I am asking the authorities here to cable the text of this letter to you so as to give you ample notice. But in any case, I am leaving sufficient time for this letter to reach you in time by the slowest route.

I also ask that this letter and my letter to Sir Samuel Hoare already referred to be published at the earliest moment. On my part, I have scrupulously observed the

rule of the jail and have communicated my desire or the contents of the two letters to no one, save my two companions, Sardar Vallabhbhai Patel and Shri Mahadev Desai. But I want, if you make it possible, public opinion to be affected by my letters. Hence my request for their early publication.

I regret the decision I have taken. But as a man of religion that I hold myself to be, I have no other course left open to me. As I have said in my letter to Sir Samuel Hoare, even if His Majesty's Government decide to release me in order to save themselves embarrassment, my fast will have to continue. For I cannot now hope to resist the decision by any other means. And I have no desire whatsoever to compass my release by any means other than honourable.

It may be that my judgement is warped and that I am wholly in error in regarding separate electorates for the Depressed Classes as harmful to them or to Hinduism. If so, I am not likely to be in the right with reference to other parts of my philosophy of life. In that case my death by fasting will be at once a penance for my error and a lifting of a weight from off those numberless men and women who have childlike faith in my wisdom. Whereas if my judgement is right, as I have little doubt it is, the contemplated step is but due to the fulfilment of the scheme of life which I have tried for more than a quarter of a century, apparently not without considerable success.

I remain,
Your faithful friend,
M. K. Gandhi

Appendix IV

GANDHIJI'S TIME-TABLE IN PRISON

In 1922 Gandhiji prosecuted his literary studies for 6 hours every day and carded and spun for 4 hours. He thus read the Gujarati Mahabharat, Urdu lives of the Prophet of Islam, his companions and Caliph Omar, Gibbon, Motley and Farrar's *Seekers after God* among other books. In carding and spinning he felt as if he was drawing nearer and nearer to the poorest of the poor and therefore to God, and he realized that the spinning-wheel was the supreme instrument of India's economic emancipation (See his letter to Hakim Ajmal Khan from Yeravda prison dated April 14, 1922).

In 1930 Gandhiji slept from 9 p.m. to 4 a.m. and the remaining 17 hours were distributed as follows:

	Hours
Brushing the teeth, bath internal and external	2
Morning and evening prayers	1
Sleep by day	1½
Meals, including preparation for them	3
Spinning on the wheel	3½
Spinning on the *takli*	2½
Walk	1½
Reading, meeting the jailer etc.	2

(See *Harijanbandhu*, July 18, 1953, p. 160).

Gandhiji wanted to reach a high standard both in spinning and carding as it was for him 'God's work' (*Bapu's Letters to Mira*, p. 124). He did his two hours' spinning on the *takli* standing as a rule (*Ibid*, p. 141).

In 1932 'there was daily at least two hours' walk divided between morning and evening' (*Ibid*, p. 167). 'We get up at 3-40. The prayer at 4 and 7-30' (*Ibid*, p. 196).

Ed.

Appendix V

DEATH BEFORE DISHONOUR

[The story of a brave girl in Italy which throws a flood of light on Gandhiji's argument, pp. 320 and 321. *Ed.*]

Maria Teresa Goretti was born at Corinaldo on October 16, 1890. Her parents Luigi and Assunta were poor peasants living from hand to mouth.

Maria never went to school. She did not know how to read or write. But she learnt to work and sing and pray. When she was six years old, her parents moved to Ferriere di Conca where they shared an old house with the widower Giovanni Serenelli and his son Alessandro who worked with them on the farm.

Luigi died when Maria was nine years old. Assunta therefore had now to do a man's job. She ploughed and sowed and reaped, and worked from dawn to dusk. The household tasks fell on Maria who was barely ten. She mothered her younger brothers and sisters, bathed them and combed their hair and taught them their prayers. She cooked, made the bread, washed clothes and swept the house.

In 1902 Maria received the Holy Communion for the first time and gave herself wholly to Jesus.

Alessandro fell in love with her, but his was not a pure love but a love that leads to sin.

Once when they were together, he suggested something to her. 'Stop that,' she snapped. 'Such a thing is a sin.' 'If you tell any one about this,' said Alessandro, 'you shall pay for it.'

Maria did not tell her mother, as the family depended on Giovanni and Alessandro.

On July 5, 1902 Maria was alone upstairs. The younger children were playing in the yard. Alessandro beckoned to her to follow him into the room close by.

'Come in,' he said. 'No, never!' replied Maria.

Before the girl could rush downstairs, the miscreant gripped her arm and dragged her into the room. The door banged on them, as he gave it a violent kick.

'No, no, no. God does not allow it, Alessandro. If you do this, you will go to hell,' cried Maria.

Seeing her firmness he whipped out a dagger.

'You may kill me, Alessandro, but you shan't have me,' declared the little lioness.

Grasping his dagger the criminal struck at Maria once, twice, thrice. The girl shouted for help but in vain. Alessandro half strangled her and then plunged his dagger into her body over and over again. He then went away and shut himself up in his room.

Maria was unconscious for a time. When she came to, she crawled towards the door and managed to pull it open. She called out to Giovanni who came and found her in a pool of blood. He shouted to Assunta who fainted at the sight. When she recovered she said, 'What is all this ?'

'It was Alessandro.'

'But why, my darling ?'

'Because he wanted me to do a bad thing, mamma. And I said, no, no, no.'

Little Maria was taken to Nettuno where the doctors found she had 14 wounds, nine of them being very deep. 'We are afraid nothing can be done,' they said. 'But we will try.'

Meanwhile the parish priest came and heard her confession. 'Maria', he said, 'you have won a great victory. You must now win another. Won't you forgive Alessandro even as Jesus forgave his enemies ?'

'Yes, yes. I forgive Alessandro,' said the dying girl.

(See *With lilies and palm* by Celine Fernandez and Mabel Menezes, published by Jesuit Missions, St. Paul's, Belgam)

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